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ISSUE 46 MARCH 2000
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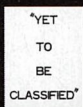


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PC PowerPlay

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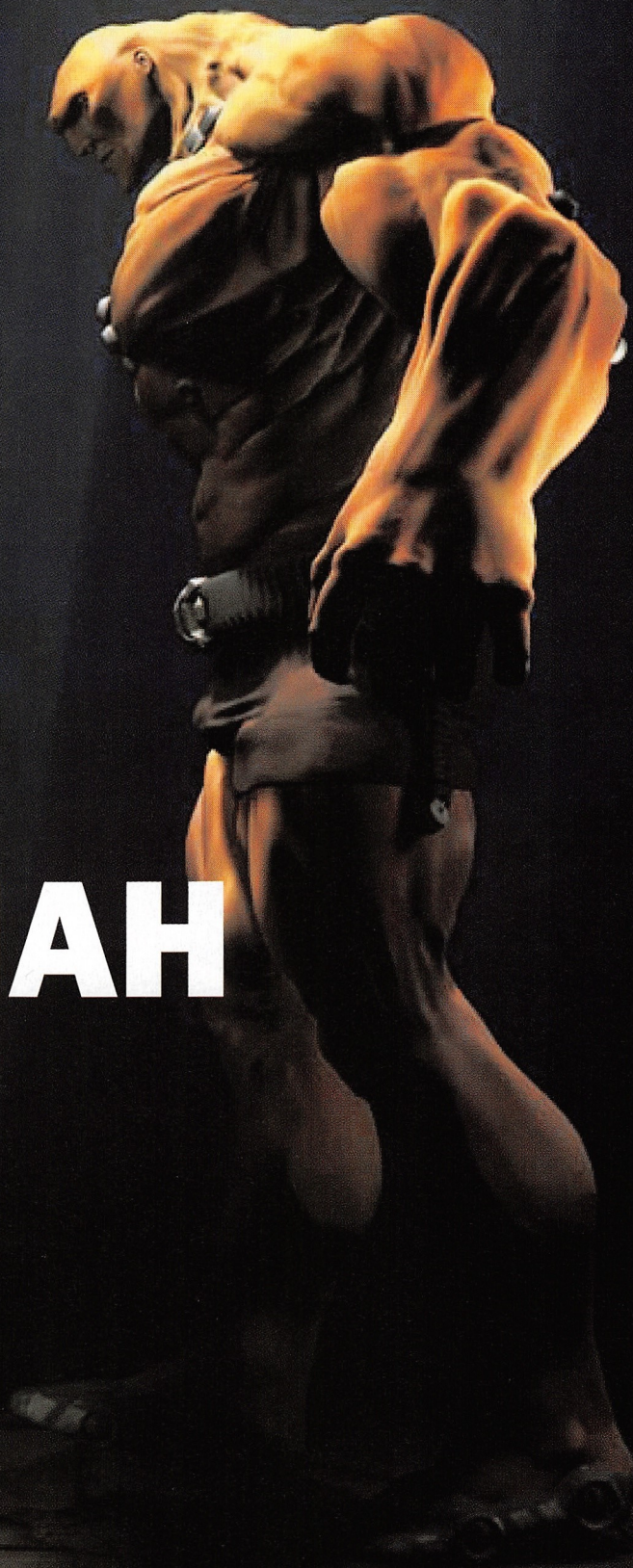
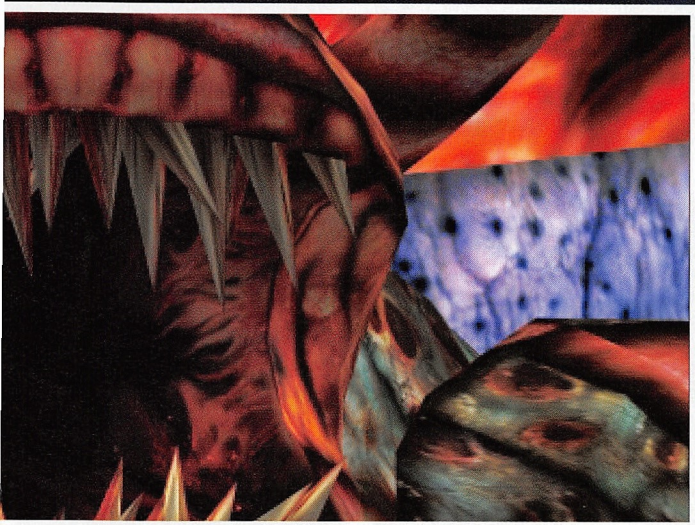
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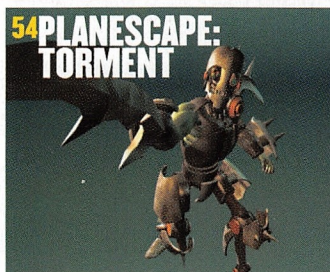
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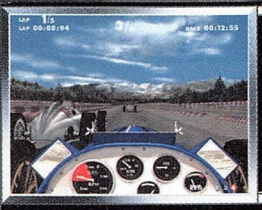


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All copyrights reserved by

Next Publishing Pty Ltd

ACN No 002 647 645

Printed by Wilke Colour

Distributed by Gordon & Gotch

Customer Service: Ph 1300 65 0666

Fax 1300 65 0777

ISSN: PCPP 1326-5644

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What we're playing:

March: Quake III, Planescape Torment, Mogwai

David: Planescape Torment, Urban Chaos,

Quake III, Lo-fi All-stars

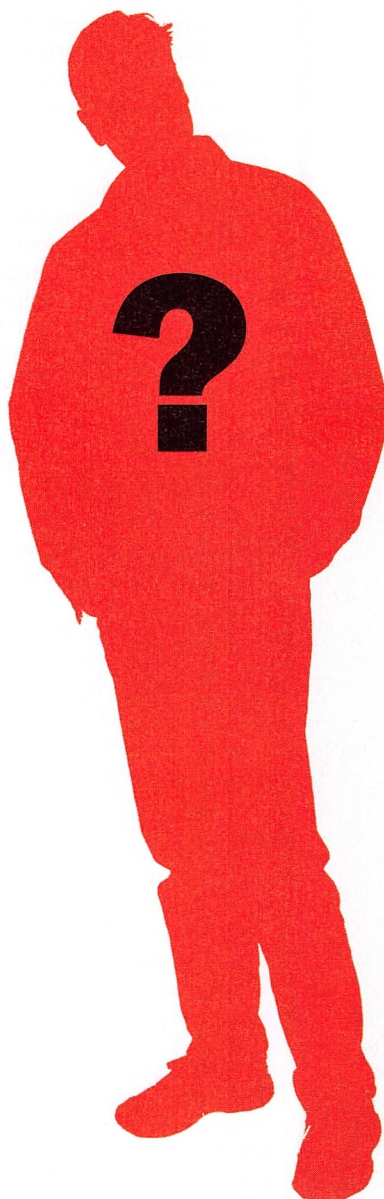
Malcolm: Wedding 2000!, Quake III, Mos Def

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"Hello. Thank you for calling PC PowerPlay, Australia's ONLY monthly PC entertainment and technology magazine.

Sorry, no one's here to take your call right now. The team are on an all-expenses-paid vacation in the infamous Surry Hills district of Sydney, Australia - living it up like only a bunch of reprobates leaving the inner sanctum of their beloved workplace for the first time in months can.

If your call is related to the absence of an editorial this month, please press 1 on your touch-tone phone.

***1**

To those many thousands of people that have called and asked for The Best Job In The World, thank you. However, the rigorous selection process for this highly-esteemed job - and well, the rather singular nature of the position - has already reduced the long list of applicants to just one. Unfortunately, due to national security concerns, we can't yet inform you of the man that steps into the big boots left behind by Ben Mansill.

All will be revealed next month...

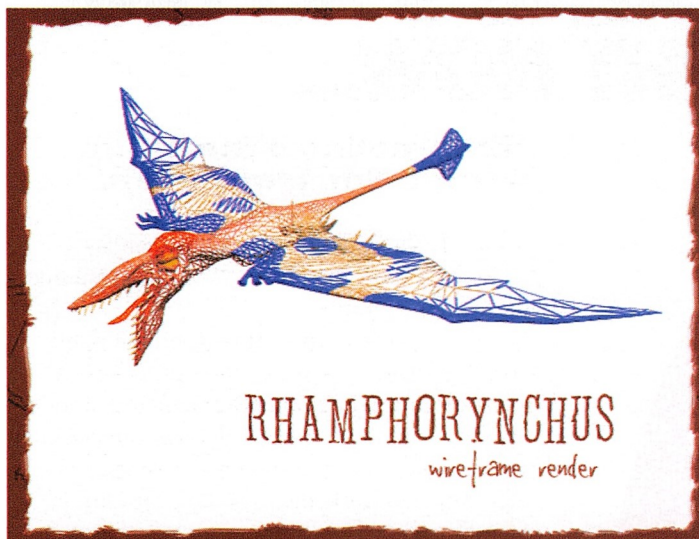
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GAMENEWS

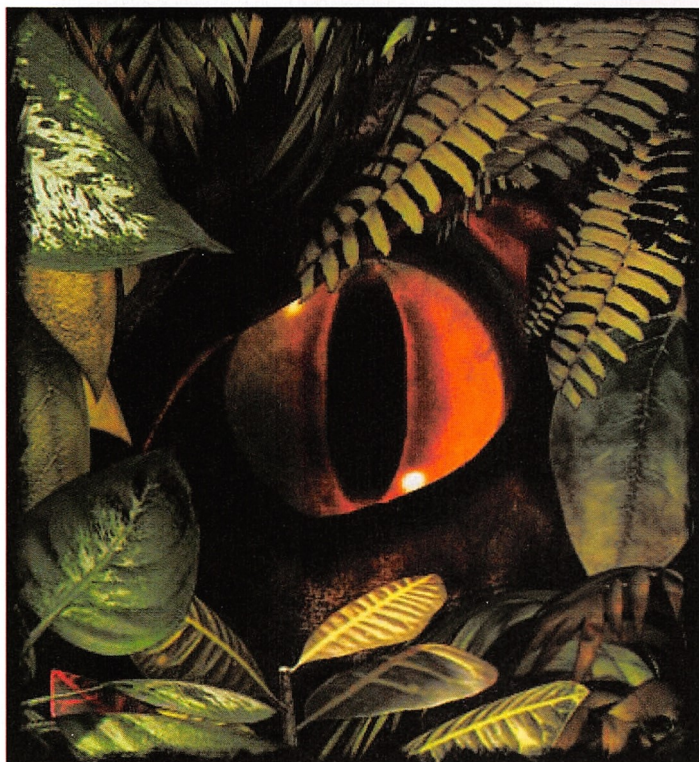
● **spotlight** Harpoon 4 • Nox • Sorcery • Picasso • Rollcage 2 • One Must Fall • Sacrifice • Turricon 3D • Neverending Story • ROCK • Search & Rescue

WALKING WITH DINOSAURS

Sid Meier hatches a new game



PSid's Dinosaur Game is the first chapter in the Sweep of Time trilogy.



Firaxis, the company helmed by legendary game designer Sid Meier, has revealed the first details regarding its eagerly awaited next title. Following in the tradition of the highly acclaimed Civilization and Alpha Centauri, Meier's latest opus is a strategy game that spans across the ages. The twist - and you knew there'd be a twist - is that this time it's all about dinosaurs.

"One of my earliest memories as a kid is going to the fair where they had these cool dinosaur-making machines," Sid recalls. "You could buy a bag with all ten dinosaurs already finished, but I insisted on going around and popping my quarter into every machine to watch each one being made. So I guess I've known for a long time that I wanted to do a Dinosaur game."

The obvious question is how does one go about making a game about dinosaurs, especially one that rivals the likes of Civilization in terms of strategic depth? Being monumentally stupid creatures, it's not as if the dinosaurs ever really developed a significant amount of technology to research or built anything resembling a thriving city and economy to manage. Bearing this in mind, you could be forgiven for thinking that there might not be all that much for the player to actually do.

But Mike Ely, the project's official producer, is quick to ease any concern. "Dinosaurs carry with them a fundamental struggle against the environment, against each other and those pesky up-and-coming mammals, against a constantly shifting world," he says. "As the world gets more complex the player's choices can



Sid, his son, and a T-Rex.



grow more complex as well, making for some pretty compelling gameplay."

With the as-yet-untitled game still in its early design stages, Sid and the rest of the Firaxis team have spent a great deal of time considering crucial gameplay issues. From the basic problem of what will the dinosaurs look like to questions of the earth's ecology at the time or even what kind of characteristics can the player change and evolve, the number of ideas canvassed is sure to be immense. What did the various dinosaurs (carnivores, omnivores, herbivores) actually eat? How many raptors would it take to defeat a T-Rex? What really happened when the Ice Age

FIRST LOOK!

HARPOON 4

• Genre: **Strategic Naval Warfare** • Developer: **SSI/Ultimation** • Due: **3rd Qtr 2000**

Those disheartened by the decline in naval strategy titles may have reason to celebrate in late 2000. Undisputed masters of the genre, SSI, are currently working on Harpoon 4. A brand new interface and a transition to a gorgeous new 3D environment will be the most noticeable enhancements, though much of the genius within Harpoon 4's design will be less prominent. Comparisons to Jane's Fleet Command will be inevitable, but SSI assures us that Harpoon 4 will be much more intuitive and extremely comprehensive. More than 600 separate ship classes will be modelled within the game, and variations within each class will be accurately portrayed. The same incredible level of detail will be applied to the game's modelling of airborne and land-based units.

The non-branching campaign will accurately track and preserve the order of battle. As a result, destroyed units won't make miraculous (and unwelcome) returns to the theatre of operations, and any infrastructure rendered inoperable will remain that way until it is repaired or replaced. One of Harpoon 4's most impressive features will be its Strike Planner, which will allow the player to launch an attack within a matter of seconds, or spend several hours perfecting their own custom plan. The



A helicopter on stilts.

This is one scary looking game.

player will simply select a target, be it an enemy frigate or an entire airbase, and the AI will create a suitable custom strike package and calculate the probability of its success. The player will then be able to accept this package, change it slightly, or construct a new package from scratch. The latter

will require the player to devise unit routes to the target, weapons loadouts, launch points and a whole host of other intricate options.

Now that we've had a taste of what Harpoon 4 will be like, the year-long wait until its release will be all but intolerable. Bring on the Tomahawks!



arrived? Should the game use a turn-based or realtime engine? It's this latter dilemma that seems to have the team the most perplexed at this stage, with debate torn between realtime's multiplayer friendly speed and the more thoughtful edge offered by a turn-based system. It will be fascinating to see which path Firaxis eventually decide to travel down in the coming months.

Sid's Dinosaur Game, as we've taken to calling it, joins 1999's Alpha Centauri and the forthcoming Civilization 3 to complete the Sweep of Time trilogy that Sid has been working on since forming Firaxis. A release date is only tentative at such an early stage, of course, so sometime next year is about all we're willing to predict.



FREE CLANCY

Red Storm Entertainment, the creators of Rainbow Six and Rogue Spear, have revealed plans for their next game. This time, however, it won't be based on the work of company founder Tom Clancy. Instead, the title, currently bearing the rather obscure codename Maeve, will draw inspiration from the Freedom series by fantasy author Anne McCaffrey. Built with a modified Rogue Spear engine, the game is set to fall under the broad category of action/adventure when it sees release later this year.

TEAM 2 DELAY

Unfortunately for everyone voting in our Most Wanted poll, Valve Software's Team Fortress sequel has been delayed. Previously it had been forecast for a release in the early months of this year, but word has it that it now won't be sighted until later in the year. Speculation suggests Valve has noted the increasingly impressive development of similar titles - Halo and Tribes 2, most obviously - and naturally decided that shipping a superior game is more important than shipping first. With all three games now destined for release very close to each other, there are surely some interesting times ahead.

THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO!

Carmageddon publisher Sci has purchased the rights to Gerry Anderson's cult puppet TV series Thunderbirds. Their first game of squad-based International Rescue has only just begun development, meaning a release date sometime during 2001 is anticipated.

VAPOURWARE

Well, the Daikatana launch party came and went without a hitch in the week prior to Christmas. That is, only if you ignore the small fact that the game wasn't actually released. Still, this minor matter didn't stop John Romero and co from organising a Daikatana deathmatch tournament to celebrate the event; the eventual winner of which received the privilege of duelling Romero himself. Surprisingly, Romero lost the encounter by five frags to four. As for when Daikatana might now be released? Soon. Maybe.

KNOCKOUT

Far from a gentleman, but always a businessman, Mike Tyson has announced his own boxing game, in conjunction with Codemasters. Imaginatively titled Mike Tyson Boxing, it is said to include an advanced career management system and a training mode. "Believe it or not, it's my kids who have been after me to get a game going for quite a while now, and I've been watching this whole area of sports-based computer games, waiting for the right opportunity to become involved," said Iron Mike. Coming next month, Don King's Fight Fixer.

spotlight

FIRST LOOK!

NOX

- Genre: RPG/RTS
- Developer: Westwood
- Due: 1st Qtr 2000

Fantasy action RPG

Players should take note of the rather tasty looking Nox, the forthcoming release from Westwood Studios. A top down, fast paced game, which incorporates realtime strategy elements, Westwood have promised a product filled with many unique features and gameplay. Nox delivers more than the simple hack and slash experience, but rewards devious tactics and sneaky thinking. Expect to find combinations of spells, meaning that instead of just hitting the bad guys with one devastating move, you can hit them with three. Spell combos can also be used to lay traps around battlefields. These spell combos look extremely cool, like casting a protection from poison spell, then creating a toxic cloud around your party. Advanced physics engines hint at some serious interaction with the game environment. Don't want a bad guy coming in a door? Roll a boulder in front of it. Fire bothering you? Go splash water on it. Nox also incorporates a true line-of-sight function for added suspense and a random map generator for lots of replay value. RPG fans will be happy with genre standards of advancing in levels and skill development, and hearty "slay the evil necromancer" storyline, while netgaming fans can expect a treat from Westwood Online, in cooperative or deathmatch style games with up to 8 players.



Stonehenge Millennium Party declared "Bummer" by revellers.



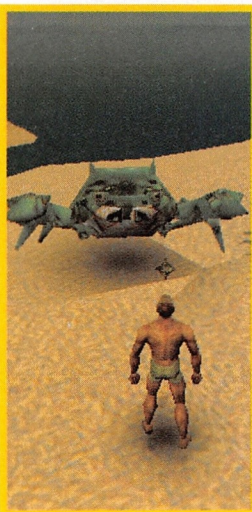
ULTIMA DISSENSION

Last year's rushed release of Ultima IX: Ascension left many gamers frustrated and disenchanted. Put simply, due to inadequately optimised D3D code the game proved unplayable on even cutting edge PC systems, while even those who could make use of the Glide support had to endure a host of bugs and regular

crashes. Thankfully, the game's developer and publisher have each recognised these concerns and committed themselves to making sure that everyone can experience Ascension as it was meant to be. To this end, not only will we see the release of a series of patches designed to improve game performance, but Electronic Arts and Origin have decided to send a replacement CD (Disc One) to all registered owners of the game once the final patch is complete. Note,

however, that you must register to receive the new disc. The offer is open until the end of March, while anyone who buys the game after this date should find themselves with an already updated version.

Though it's pleasing to see a company initiate such a generous deal - in fact, it's probably unprecedented in the games industry - we can only hope that Origin and, especially, EA learn a valuable lesson from the whole unfortunate and messy situation.



(left) The Avatar versus Crab Thing. The dignified sport of Nude Crustacean Wrestling comes to Ultima.



SORCERY

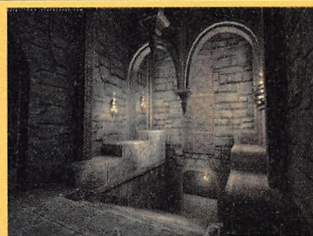
• Genre: Action/RPG • Developer: Starbreeze • Due: Late 2000

Does anyone remember a game called Into the Shadows? It was the hottest thing around about four years ago, thanks in large part to an astonishingly impressive (for its time, anyway) rolling demo circulated after 1996's E3 Show. Sadly, Scavenger, the talented company behind the game, splintered soon afterwards and Into the Shadows never saw the light of day. Magnus Hogdahl once worked on Into the Shadows, which perhaps explain why his new game Sorcery looks so damn good.

A firstperson action roleplaying game, Sorcery is

reputed to be an attempt to marry the depth and atmosphere of Ultima Underworld with the beauty and fast-paced combat of Quake. Unlike so many other action/RPGs, however, it promises not to be level or mission-based, but rather replete with many quests and a strong story focus. And, naturally, given the game's title, it shouldn't come as a surprise to learn that magic plays a fairly major role in the narrative and your character's list of abilities.

Right now Sorcery looks stunning, so let's hope this time this one actually gets finished, okay?



Out of the Shadows, anyone?

INFOGRAMES SAVE GT

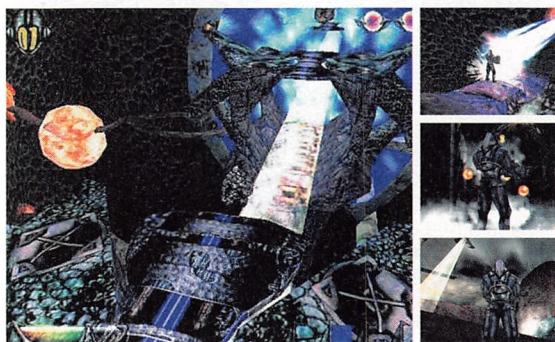
You'd think the company who produced Driver and Unreal Tournament would be rolling in dough. Alas, 1999 was a grim year for GT Interactive, who nearly collapsed into bankruptcy. However, the good Samaritans at growing French publisher Infogrames have announced a partial buyout, keeping GT afloat although some restructuring will occur. The infusion of cash should keep GT running for a while longer.

CHERRY MERRY GAMING

Russian game developer - and obvious serious Vodka drinkers - K-D Lab, has a new project: Moonshine Runners - a fantasy-style racing game that features bizarre cars with magic spells. Originally developed as Mechasoma, this insane product claims to be a turn-based racing game with end of level bosses to defeat. K-D Lab believes that (and we are not making this up) that it fills the niche "Cherry Merry Fairy Race!" genre. And in case you were worried, if any concept was too innovative, they split it into two less innovative innovations, so there was innovation for all. We could go on but frankly, don't want to.

SIDE SCROLLING

German developer Rainbow Arts are presently putting the final touches to a frantic 3D shooter called Turrican 3D. Older gamers may well have fond memories of Turrican. A side-scrolling, platform-based shoot 'em up, it was a massive success on 16-bit formats like the Amiga and Super Nintendo back in the very early 90s. With a feature set highlighted by lots of weapons and even more explosions, Turrican always possessed the kind of gameplay that would never go out of style. So, Rainbow Arts (with many of the original team still on board) are doing a remake with a sexy new 3D engine. It appears likely that THQ will publish, but don't let that put you off, this could be very cool indeed.



ALL SHINY AND NEW

With Messiah almost with us after two thousand... I mean, three years in development, Shiny is now ready to go public with its next title. After E3 last year we visited the Shiny offices and were treated to an impressive demonstration of a new game that we would describe as kinda like Giants - but only if it were a realtime strategy game.

It's called Sacrifice, by the way, and it looks utterly gorgeous. Thanks to the use of a proper 3D engine, you'll be able to view the world from any conceivable angle,

zooming out to a godlike perspective or zooming up close and personal to the myriad number of weird troops featured in the game. Magic plays a large role in proceedings, with a litany of spells causing mayhem and madness across the countryside. The interface looked rather special, too, as its intuitive feel means you'll hardly even notice it's there.

Sacrifice is due for release in the second half of the year and looks set to confirm Shiny's reputation as one of the more innovative developers in the business.

THIEVES LIKE US

Time for a little break-and-enter work with this duo of rogue-themed games.

Who said people aren't interested in art anymore?



EA F1 OK

Racing game lovers can rejoice, as field leaders EA Sports have announced F1 2000 complete with the official license of the Formula One Administration. With all of the real drivers, cars and tracks from the FIA Formula One World Championship 2000 season to be featured, EA is boasting that every aspect of a real race has been modelled to levels of detail beyond anything available. The game also apparently features incredibly sophisticated artificial intelligence, which means that each rival driver and car behaves like in real-life.

Newly announced this month are a couple of games seeking to pick up the baton from Thief: The Dark Project in the sneaky action stakes. Coincidentally, both titles concern the theft of artworks, as the player is twice cast into the role of an art thief.

In Picasso from Promethean Designs, the developers of Powerboat Racing and Renegade Racers, you are a Contract Cat Burglar hired to steal valuable pieces of art from the world's museums. To accomplish your missions it's necessary to eliminate the many



Gah! How does avoid getting a crick in her neck?

guards and other types of security encountered in any modern day gallery. Since you cannot kill anyone - and must get in and out entirely undetected - stun guns and chloroform must be used to knock out enemies. This adds urgency to proceedings because guards will eventually recover from your attentions and sound the alarm. Pre-mission planning, reconnaissance and all manner of cool, high-tech gadgets can only add to the tactical options at your disposal. The only downside is a release date likely to be over a year away.

In the meantime, though, there's Kat Burglar to satisfy your stealth 'em up needs. The eponymous Kat is a Sixties girl, who likewise is determined that museum space remains bare across the globe. From Krome Studios, this action/adventure has its tongue planted rather more firmly in its cheek than Picasso, while Ms Burglar attempts to thwart the terrible plans of her former boss and master jewel thief Hugo Biggs-Lazenby. This one's looking like a mid year release.

NEVERENDING STORY



MACHINES

MACHINES ON THE BLINK Without much of a fanfare, the sequel to the popular game Machines has been cancelled. "Acclaim didn't want to do it. We did work on it for a few months and what we had done with game engine we put into another title we're currently working on," said a spokesperson for the project. And that's all, folks behaves like in real-life.

File this one under the better late than never category, we guess. Taking its cue from Michael Ende's novel rather than the 80s kids' film, Discreet Monsters' The Real Neverending Story is an adventure game with an emphasis upon character interaction, surreal graphics and loads of highly peculiar creatures. With not inconsiderable confidence, the developers are expecting their game to elevate character interaction, in particular, to



Why, it's a distant relative of our very own Theodore!

new heights of plausibility. To be honest, we're not overly fussed whether or not they're successful in this area, just so long as the game has absolutely nothing to do with that godawful Limahl song from the movie. And that haircut? Shudder.

Oh, and the game - assuming it doesn't actually live up to its name - will be finished as we head in to the second half of the year.



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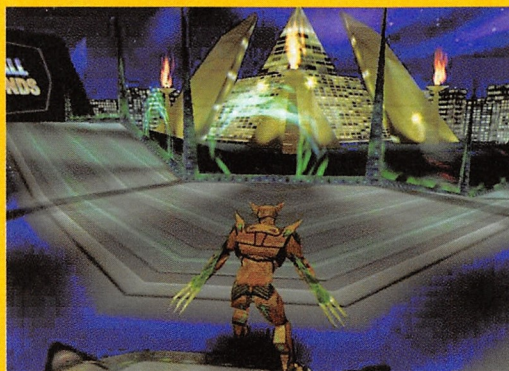
Europe's hearts are all aflutter with Earth 2150. Developed in Germany, this realtime strategy game is setting fire to the charts and warming the hearts of fans and critics alike. But then they love their little blokes in Germany. The sequel to Earth 2140 (86% PCPP#16), the game features true 3D terrain and high level physics, so that troop movements have to be carefully managed in the ever changing environment. There are a total of 90 missions and three races available for the player to choose from.

NEW SEASON

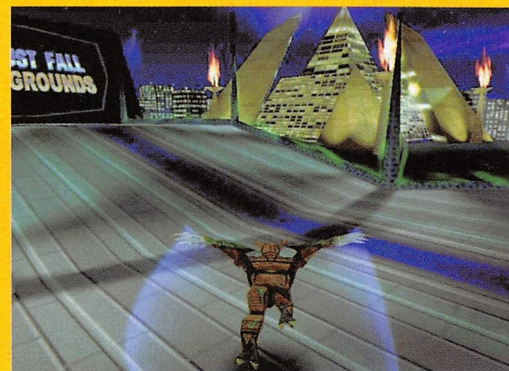
FIFA 2000 may have a little competition soon with Havas announcing Ultimate Soccer Manager 2000. A database of 13,000 players from over 500 teams from England, Scotland, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Holland, Argentina, Brazil, Belgium and the USA might sound impressive, but what about Australia, eh? Sheesh! Potential managers will also be able to explore the darker side of football with the Bets, Bungs and Bribes feature that is included in the game. With such a phenomenal array of talent, let's hope they remember to program a decent game.

spotlight
FIRST LOOK!

ONE MUST FALL: BATTLEGROUNDS



"But how does he..."



"Oh, I see..."

• Genre: Robot Combat • Developer: Diversions Entertainment • Due: 3rd Qtr 2000

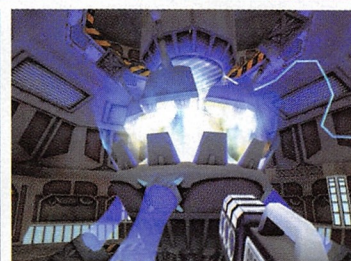
Not a sequel, but rather a supplementary game to OMF 2097, Diversions Entertainment are releasing images and details of their 3D robotic fighter, One Must Fall: Battlegrounds. Taking the role of gigantic robots warriors, you must face others in the ultimate spectator sport in this rear-view mass-scale beat 'em up. Graphically, OMF is promising big

things, although acceleration is required for the rendering engine.

"We do have a nice scripting language, model independent hierarchical animation system, rendering independent particle generation system, fully dynamic lights (spot and sphere), as well as a slew of other cute things," according to Rob Elam, the project's big kahuna.

WELCOME TO THE ROCK

SingleTrac are pretty confident in their new game, Rock, claiming it will be unmatched in either single or multi-player gaming. Set in a post-apocalypse future, Rock plans to include gameplay that runs the gamut from single player stealth/assassin missions all the way through to running around in a hardcore battlemech, destroying all in its path. Three different factions determine the style of gameplay, from serious shooting through to control of Big Guns with some Thief-style subtlety thrown in for good measure. Small units are carefully put best results in variety of missions. No release date as yet available.



Not the Alcatraz I remember...

CRAFT OF LOVE



Not a pretty sight.

After several lacklustre attempts, H.P. Lovecraft's seminal horror work, Call of Cthulhu and the myths surrounding it are coming to the PC. Headfirst Productions, UK-based developer notable for Simon the Sorcerer 3, has signed an exclusive deal with license holders Chaosium Inc. to develop a line of games based on the Cthulhu stories.

First release from Headfirst will be the action-horror Dark Corners of the Earth, a firstperson perspective game. Dark Corners will include single player and online components, where players can explore scenarios and solve puzzles. Currently without a publisher, the game is tentatively scheduled for third quarter release this year. No word yet on other titles springing from the deal.



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HELLBOY ON EARTH

Rumour has it that the darling of the creator owned comic scene, Mike Mignola has signed with Cryo Interactive to develop his famed creation Hellboy, published by Dark Horse to both PC and Playstation. Details are sketchy, but the game is apparently a thirdperson roleplaying game using a new engine currently under development by Cryo.

INSANE CODIES

March should see the release of the non-console driving game from Codemasters, Insane. As the name suggests, this is a driving game that breaks all the rules, being totally off road, with over thirty different terrains, everything from buggies through to military trucks and a big selection of missions types. From simple first across the line races to mass destruction derbies. The object is not to drive the fastest, but the meanest and the best. The game should use the Invictus developed Center-of-Gravity physics model.

spotlight

FIRST LOOK!

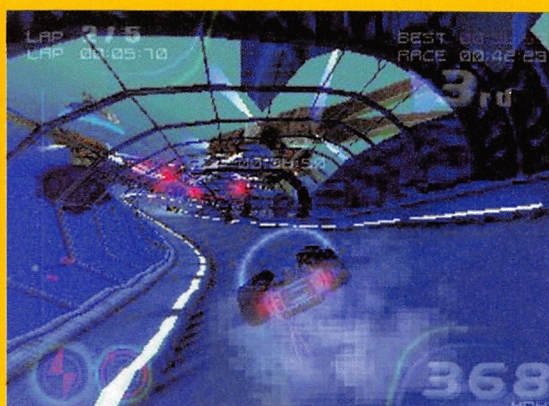
ROLLCAGE 2

- Genre: Road Carnage
- Developer: Attention to Detail
- Due: 2nd Qtr 2000

The original Rollcage (90% PCPP#38), if you remember, was the digital equivalent of crashing headlong into a brick wall at 200kmph. Which is kinda why we liked it so much. A stupefyingly fast console-esque racer, Rollcage featured tracks that would do a contortionist proud and a larger weapons stockpile than an American Survivalist's underground bunker. News, then, of a sequel was greeted with smiles all round the office.

Devising even more spectacular weapon effects has been of chief concern for UK developers Attention To Detail. With good reason, too, as the gorgeous explosions, thundering missiles and searing lasers were undoubtedly the game's highlight. All features only bettered, perhaps, by the ability to drive upside down and on the ceiling of tunnels. Several new game modes are also under consideration, including a two-player splitscreen option, arena tracks for out-and-out car combat and the curiously titled Rumble Soccer.

Oh, what a feeling, as Lionel Richie once sang, when you're driving on the ceiling. Or something like that.

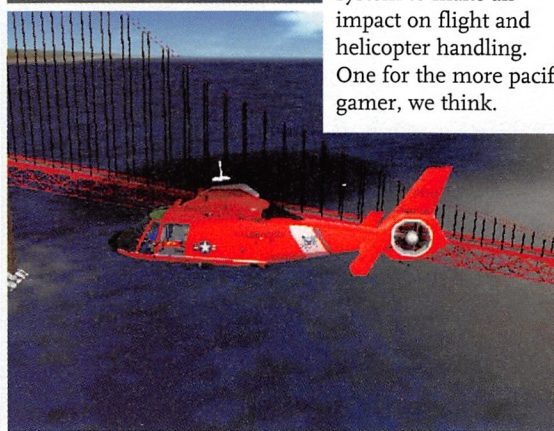
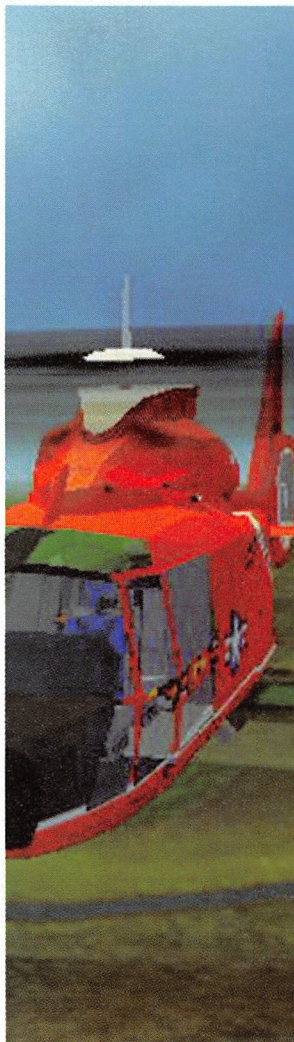


The office carpark - Friday, 5:30pm.



WHAT, NO GUNS?

No combat, no violence, just saving people in a whole lot of trouble. That's the aim of the doomed Search and Rescue 2 (SAR 2) - a simulator where the player takes control of a Dolphin HH65 helicopter, assigned to an American Coast Guard base. SAR 2 will focus on realism in helicopter handling - simulating torque effect, hover effect, weight, auto-rotations, aircraft emergencies and speed limitations and general physics, as well as a wind and air pressure system to make an impact on flight and helicopter handling. One for the more pacific gamer, we think.



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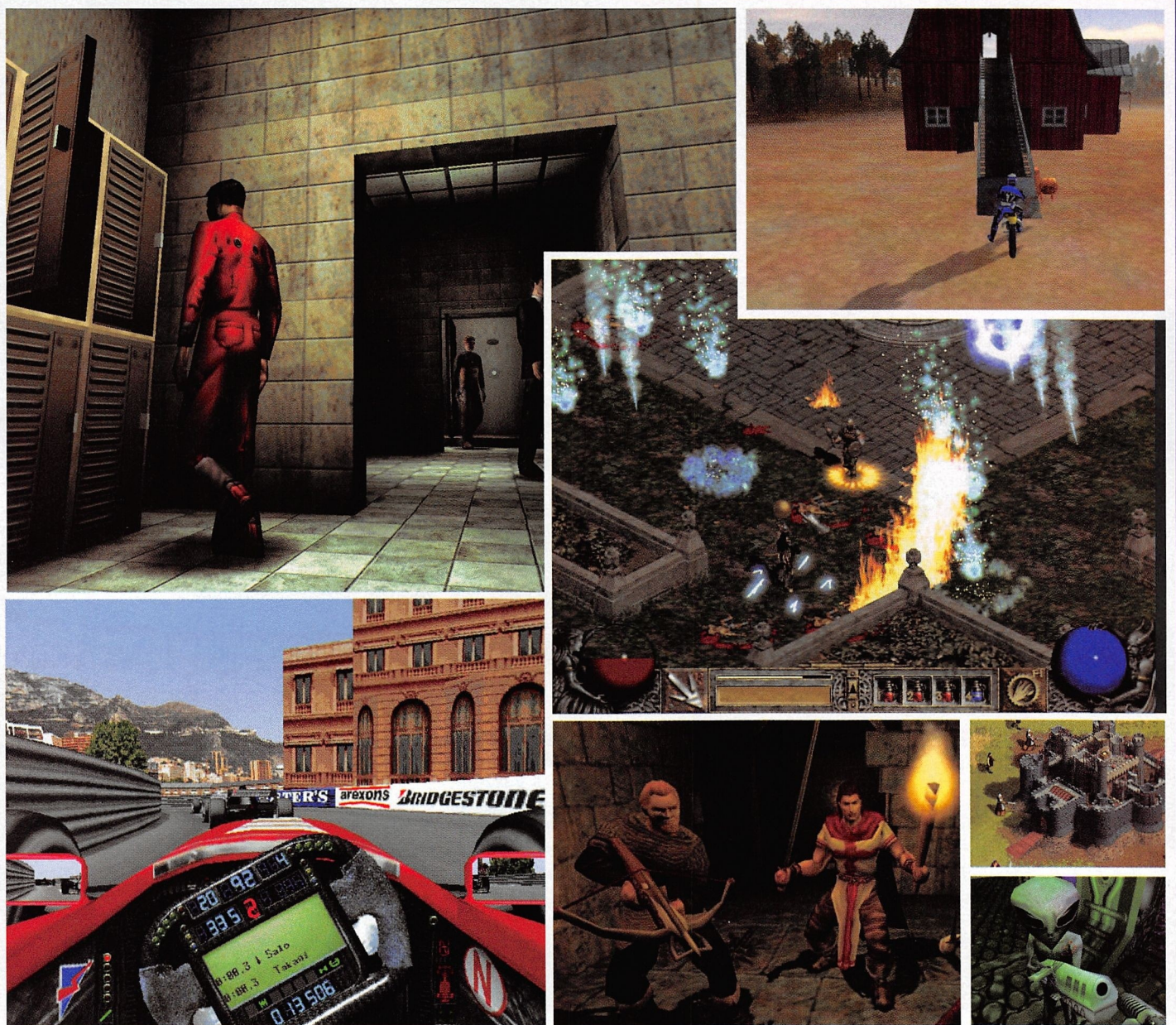


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E



VOLVA

IN AN UNCHARTED REGION OF THE GALAXY, COMPUTER ARTWORKS DISCOVER A NEW STRAIN OF GAMEPLAY.

DETAILS

- **Genre:** Action/Strategy/RPG
- **Players:** 1-Multi
- **Developer:** Computer Artworks
- **Publisher:** Interplay
- **Due:** Mid 2000

* Computer Artworks has taken a circuitous route to games development. From highly polished screensavers such as 1995's Organic Art to cutting edge experiments in artificial intelligence, the small London-based outfit has elected to operate chiefly on the periphery of the games industry. However, as we await the release of their first game, it seems possible that this unique background might ultimately prove to be an ideal starting point. An outsider's perspective may allow them to create a game that isn't weighed down by the typical conventions and formulae. At the very least it's unlikely we'll see them release,

say, a run-of-the-mill realtime strategy clone. For which we can be immensely thankful, I'm sure you'll agree.

DNA warriors

So, Evolva, then. It's an odd name. It sounds rude: the tiniest slip of the tongue could well result in an embarrassing exchange with the sales assistant at your local games store. More seriously, there's the obvious association with matters scientific and, specifically, evolutionary. Humankind's long history of war has enabled the emergence of the Evolva, the ultimate warrior or Genohunter, adapted by and nurtured through generations of military research. It has evolved so far and so rapidly that it is capable of mutating its DNA on-the-fly, transforming its very nature in realtime. In an immensely enticing fashion, this remarkable ability forms the crux of Evolva's gameplay.

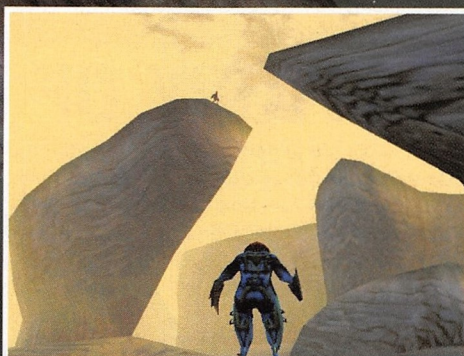
After defeating an enemy, the Genohunter can collect the fallen creature's "gibs" and begin to assimilate them into its DNA. Kill a creature that possesses a certain type of armoured skin and your Genohunter could start to exhibit a similar form of protection.

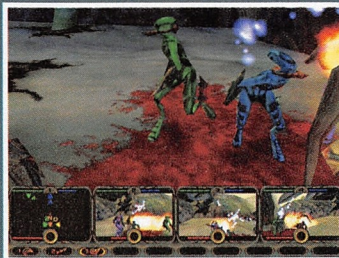
Absorb the genes of a fire-breathing beast and your Genohunter may well soon have a new incendiary method of attack at its disposal. Of course, nothing is ever predictable when it comes to evolution, so there's only ever a chance that things will turn out as you expect. Possessing a certain gene merely confers the potential (or predilection) for a certain type of behaviour. Though, if you concentrate your efforts on a select type of creature, then the chances of evolving its particular natural talents will increase accordingly. Apparently, there is a sufficient number of creatures and skills to result in over one

billion permutations. While such a figure is large enough to be virtually meaningless - and can be kindly attributed to an excessive degree of enthusiasm on the part of the developers - it nevertheless suggests that no two Genohunters should be alike.

Survival of the fuzziest

Like the Genohunter, the game itself is evolution happening before your eyes. For the game's development, Computer Artworks has accumulated the traits of multiple genres. Part action, part tactical strategy, part role-playing, Evolva is a bizarre, mutant, hybrid beast like we've never seen before. Boasting fast-paced action-based missions, an assortment of powerful organic weapons, a startlingly original method of character development and the challenge of orchestrating the movements of a squad of four Genohunters, it's perhaps no





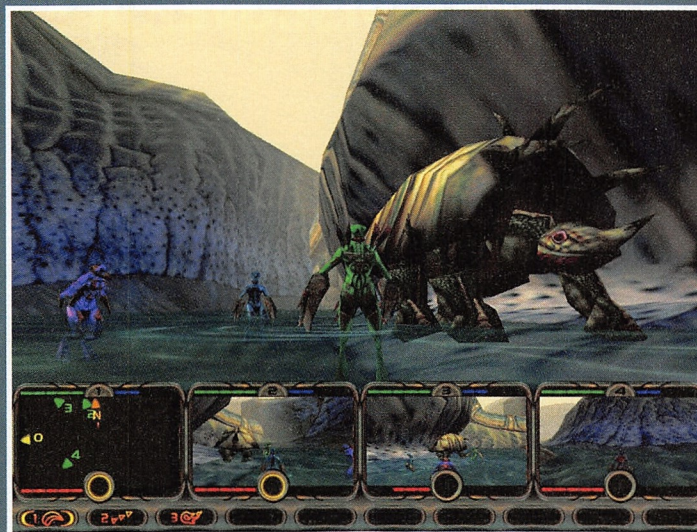
The four windows across the base of the screen allow you to monitor the actions of each Genohunter in your team.

exaggeration to say this is a whole new species of game.

As the eponymous Evolva, the player must demonstrate an ability to adapt to these diverse gameplay elements. Versatility is paramount in the survival of the fittest. It's also crucial for the game's artificial intelligence. Utilising advanced techniques that go beyond the usual scripted or triggered responses seen in most other games, the AI in Evolva purports to be disturbing in its mimicking of life. Fuzzy logic is the key: put simply, this dictates that given exactly the same initial conditions, the end result of multiple trials could be (slightly or drastically) different. In terms of AI, this means creatures (both the enemies and your CPU-controlled squad members) will display a tendency to react in a particular way, but will not always do so. Essentially, it's an if-then routine with a few weighted variables thrown into the mix. The result, however, will make for an unpredictable and hopefully believable life simulation. Perhaps we might be witnessing the evolution of AI?

Lush chaos

In contrast, stylistically, Evolva is a lush vision of a totally alien future. The sumptuous, rainbow-drenched scenery very much follows in the vein of such visual delights as Bioware's MDK 2 and



"THE FANTASTICAL, MYRIAD-COLOURED LANDSCAPES APPEAR AS IF FRACTALLY GENERATED..."

Planet Moon's Giants, both titles which Interplay will release this year alongside Evolva. But, in a gesture toward the underlying ecological themes at play, you can sense the influence of chaos theory. The fantastical, myriad-coloured landscapes appear as if fractally generated, like maps made in a Mandelbrot set. It's all just familiar enough to make sense - think of the vast wonders of a coral reef for a reference point - yet an undeniable strangeness

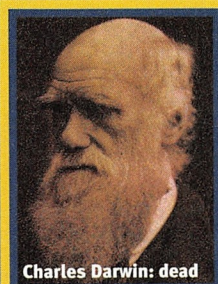
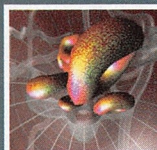
permeates through to bewilder and disconcert.

In a year where "realism" seems to be the catchcry for developers worldwide, it's exciting to see a game that dares to be embrace the unusual. Still, despite featuring all the elements of a great game, there does remain only the possibility (high as it may be) that Evolva will actually turn out to be as good as we hope it will be. Natch.

David Wildgoose



Some Organic Art, Computer Artworks' 1995 'evolving' screensaver project.



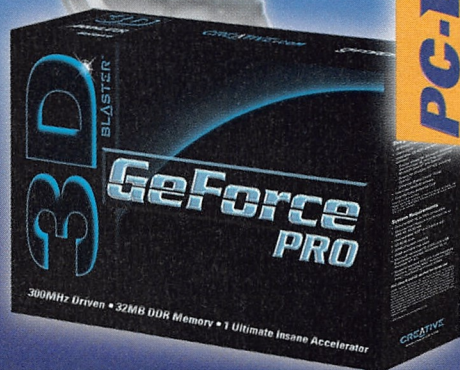
Charles Darwin: dead

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVOLUTION

While plenty of games have exploited genetic engineering to a limited extent in their flimsy excuses for plots, few have tried to work the very function of DNA into the core gameplay like Evolva. The clever and surprisingly sophisticated Creatures series is one such example, while Bullfrog's Gene Wars was a moderate success and System Shock 2 fared rather better,

handling the grey issue of genetic modification with a deft touch. Elsewhere, Maxis had a go with their overly-ambitious Sim Life, regrettably forgetting to design a game in the process. Sadly, at the time we went to print, the father of evolution theory, Sir Charles Darwin, was unavailable for comment. Probably because he's been dead for over a century.

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REACH FOR

An old-school strategy classic gets a stunning make-over.

DETAILS

■ **Genre:** Turn-based Strategy
 ■ **Players:** 1-6 IPX, up to 4 on 'net
 ■ **Developer:** SSG
 ■ **Publisher:** SSI
 ■ **Due:** 2nd Qtr 2000

* Way back in the early 80s, Ian Trout and Roger Keating formed SSG and they began their first game: Reach for the Stars. On ye olde Apple II, Reach for the Stars was a space strategy game pitting players against the computer, or each other, for control of up to 54 star systems. The game pretty much launched the turn-based strategic space game genre as we know it now. Eighteen years later, and SSG has come full-circle. Once more Reach for the Stars is on the drawing boards.

"THE MOTTO FOR THE INTERFACE WAS 'DEATH TO SPREADSHEETS'."

A gala event

In the past SSG has been known more for its AIs and deep game play than eye-candy but this time around it has decided to lay on a gala event. Gregor Whiley is SSG's Vice President and an established Game Designer, currently working on RFTS. He explains the thinking behind the move to glorious 3D graphics: "The motto for the interface look was 'death to spreadsheets'."

The team at SSG saw no reason why their new strategy game should "look like a badly coloured Excel implementation", and so almost every item that could be 3D, is 3D. This might be the prettiest turn-based strategy ever made. "The large number of 3D models help to greatly differentiate species, and they also add a great deal of pleasure to the R&D and Ship Design processes," Whiley adds.

These graphics are slated to be

more than pretty lures for new gamers. Looking at the main game screens you quickly realise a lot of work has gone into functionality of the interface. Virtually everything is represented graphically to ease navigation and understanding of the game. Of course the detailed, written, information is still there but you don't have to wade through it every time you select something, nor do you have to bounce through five sub-screens to get where you want.

"All major screens are only a single mouse click from almost anywhere in the game, and we've done a lot of work on making the game just as much fun to play with 20 planets as it is with a single system," explains Whiley.

This idea is carried throughout

the game. Resource points are either research or industry points and all planetary resources go into a "global" pool which can be used where needed. This might sound like it cuts down on the strategy of the game but this is not the case. Do you build up your technology, industrial complexes, planetary defences or fleets? Do you put your expensive shipyard on the front, where it will do the most good or back where it is protected?

Custom-built

Having the original designers of the first Reach for the Stars as well as people like Whiley - who have played the original game for the love of it - has placed SSG in a good position to recapture the feel which made the first so popular, and add new elements to kick the game into a brave new era.

"As well as the new graphics and interface, we've added tactical combat, detailed tech trees which

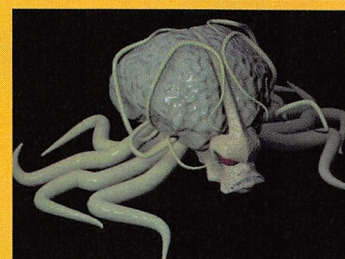


are unique to each species, ship design, diplomacy, multiplayer, a long campaign and a whole host of other improvements, including a fully featured editor," says Whiley.

The game editor seems every bit as comprehensive and deep as one would expect from the makers of the excellent, and flexible, Warlords series. Players can even tailor the techs available in each tree, as well as the speed of advancement, not to mention all the usual elements such as galaxy arrangement, competing races and the like.

The game will have a 200 system maximum, as well as 288 customisable ships, customisable races, as well as 16 pre-defined ones each with its own tech tree.

These tech trees are dynamic, further adding to the replay value. The scenario designer can assign probabilities to techs in each game, meaning the tree never has to be the same. Once the game starts, pre-scripted conditions can also add or remove available techs. In the Star Trek space-strategy



We really hope that this guy is on our side.

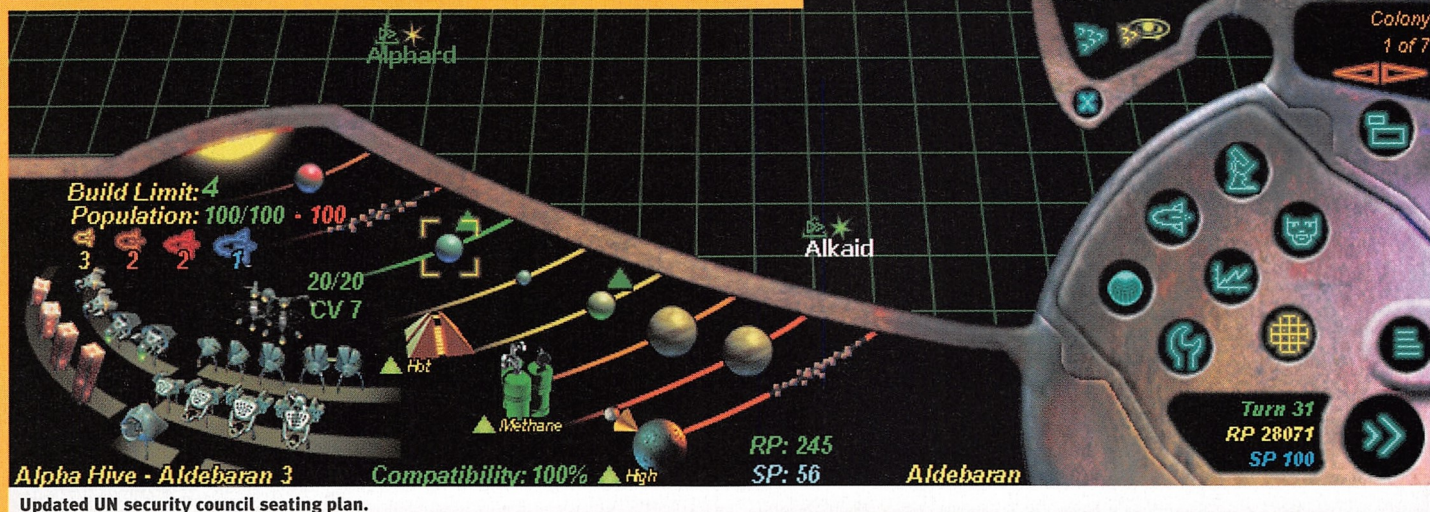
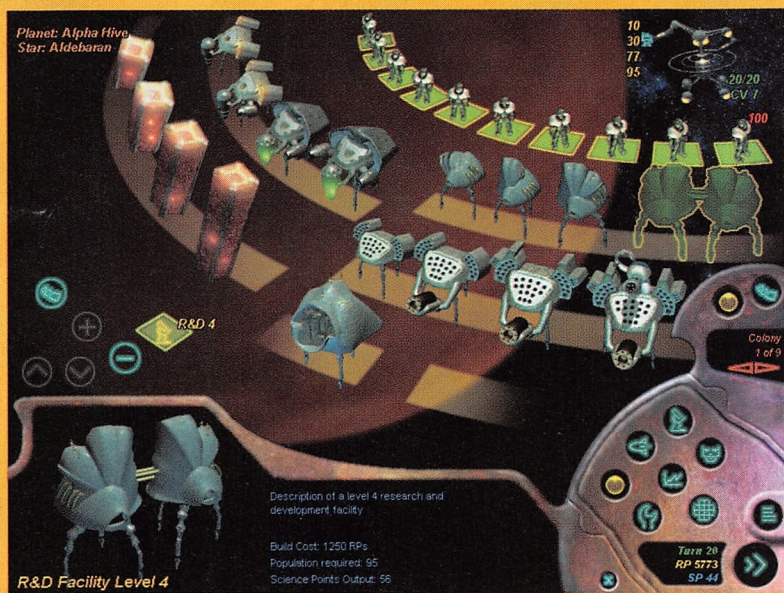
game, Birth of the Federation, once the Borg appeared you could kiss your colonies good-bye. The ability to suddenly research "inverted-deflector-array guns" to foil the Borg in true Star Trek style would have been fantastic. It will be great to see how this works in Reach for the Stars.

Research is a central element to space exploration games but players will have to do more than have their egg-heads working overtime. At some stage, gung-ho types will have to be mustered and the Big Book of Space Combat dusted off. Expect tactics to come to the fore: "Your combat power is



The new interface looks cool. Whether it makes any sense is another matter.

THE STARS



a function of the interaction between your formation and your enemy's, and will probably vary quite considerably with range, depending on your weapon types," explains Whiley.

Generally speaking, the range advantage will go to the fleet with the best propulsion, leaving you to decide on the age old question of firepower or speed.

"The rules provide important bonuses if you have balanced formation and your opponent does not, and you can greatly improve your chance of withdrawing from combat if you leave your destroyers behind to provide a screen for your expensive and slow to produce

capital ships," adds Whiley.

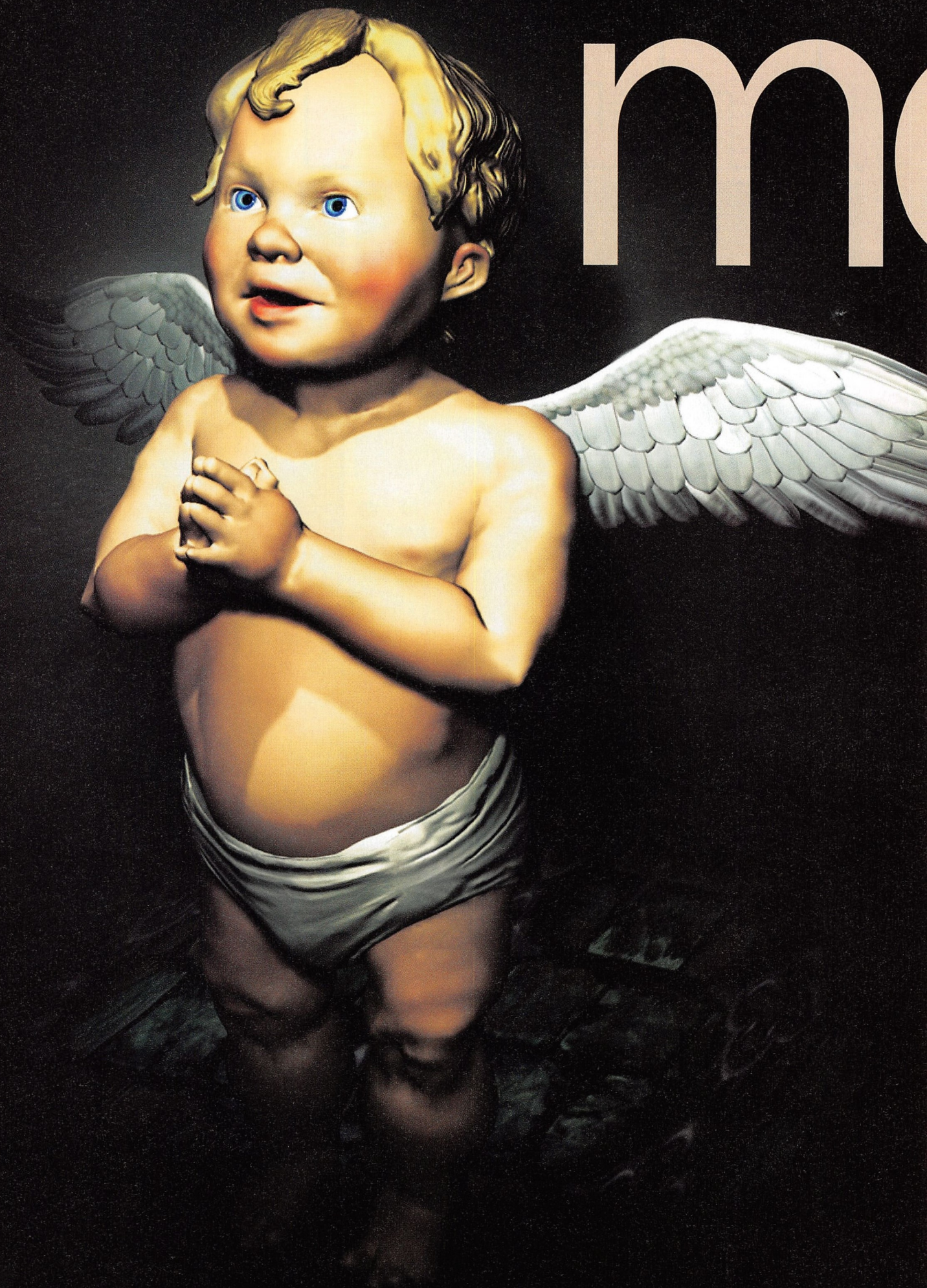
While most players will be used to more individual ship control this system does give a feel of fleet combat and also comes from the ease of mass management ideas. We'll have to see the system in action at turn 30 and then at turn 300 to see just how well it works.

All in all, Reach for the Stars is shaping up to raise the bar in space strategy games - just check out the graphics or the powerhouse editor. Not a surprising consequence when a company takes great care and pride in remaking the game that launched it such a long time ago.

Timothy C. Best



I dare to you make a funny caption here. It's tetro funkified!



essiah

WHAT ON EARTH POSSESSED YOU? SHINY'S LONG OVERDUE NEXT-GENERATION 3D ACTION ADVENTURE GAME IS ALMOST UPON US. AND IT'S A CORKER.

DETAILS

■ **Genre:** 3D Multiple Personality Action/Adventure
■ **Players:** 1
■ **Developer:** Shiny/Team Ego
■ **Publisher:** Interplay
■ **Due:** March 2000

* Humankind has sunk to despicable depths. Where once the study and development of science and technology was driven by a blinding desire to better the entire human race, it is now exploited to better a select few. The gap between the extremely powerful and the economically disadvantaged widens. The world becomes a truly terrible place to live – a place where the majority work under slave-like conditions, and worse, are oblivious to the end which they serve.

The world's elite (conceitedly naming themselves The Fathers) eventually deem the general populace a hopelessly inefficient resource, and so undertake a doctrine to steadily replace humankind with beings - however twisted and aberrant - that they can easily design and manufacture themselves. Not before long, The Fathers boldly commission a study of a metaphysical nature and find incontrovertible evidence that God really does exist. Their methods and theories are so advanced that they even work out what God has got planned for all of humankind, and so re-create his arch-rival to "take care of business".

Of course, the Big Man won't take to mere mortals toying around with destiny. So he sends a saviour.

A Messiah.

An angelic being, in nappies. With the most grotesque pair of knees ever witnessed. Standing no taller than a metre. Lacking the right build to handle any kind of weaponry. None at all.

He's been tasked with putting an end to The Fathers' plans and clean up the hell-hole known as Earth.

And his name is Bob.

Surely the Guy Upstairs has gone stark raving bonkers.

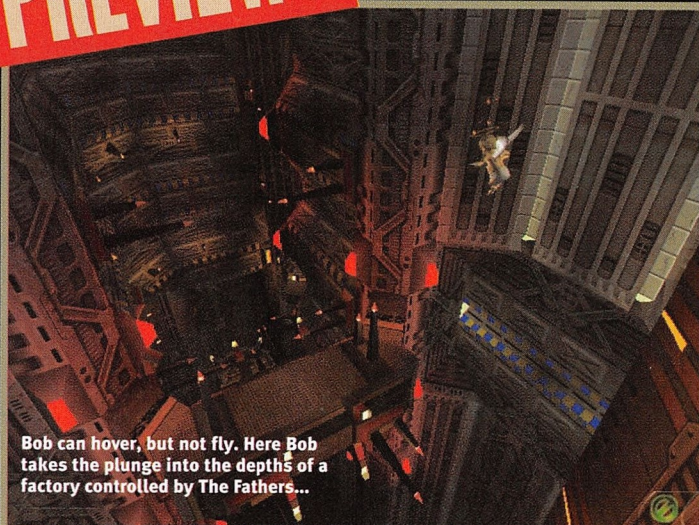
Team Ego

There's only one games developer that could come up with a premise as intriguing and incongruous as that: Shiny Entertainment. With a number of leftfield games under their belt, Shiny have the dubious reputation of being "that company what does them really quirky games". This is

not at all an unconsidered conclusion – just take a look at some of Shiny's other breadwinners, Earthworm Jim (with melodious bovines and lots of simulated goop) and the brilliant yet unfortunately overlooked MDK (lotsa warped weapons and enemies in this one).

A more fitting appraisal of a key factor in Shiny's success is that they ensure each game gets a huge helping of character – both in those you play as or come up against - sometimes at the expense of mass appeal. MDK especially was known for alienating a large section of the gaming community with its unique style and lack of adherence to the strict conventions set by the action shooter faithful. And Messiah will continue the Shiny trend, much to their credit.

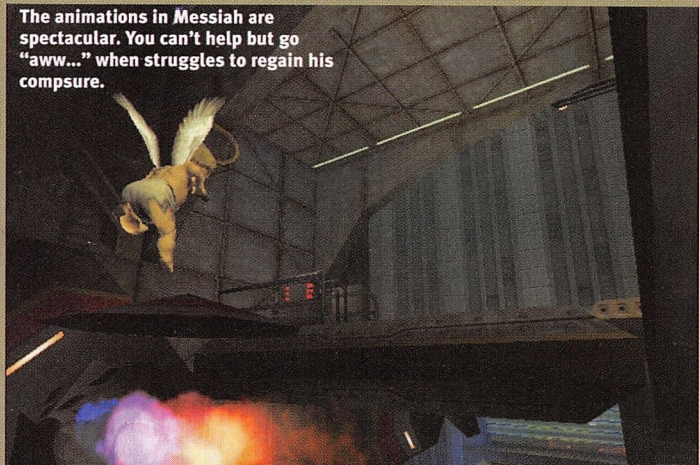




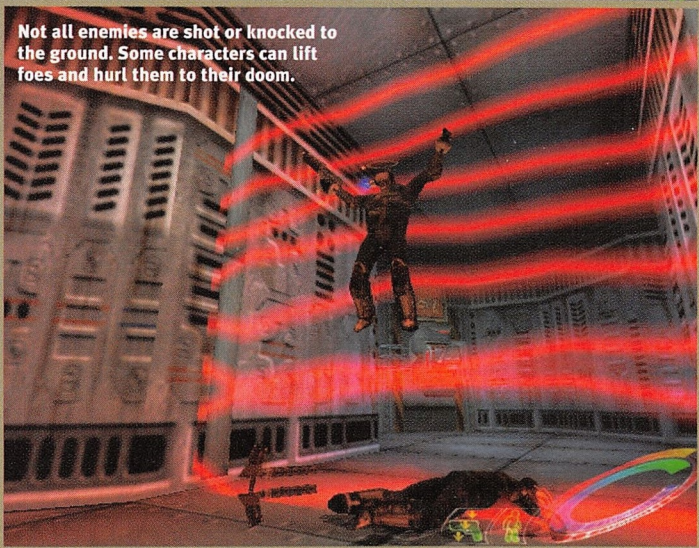
Bob can hover, but not fly. Here Bob takes the plunge into the depths of a factory controlled by The Fathers...



The animations in Messiah are spectacular. You can't help but go "aww..." when struggles to regain his composure.



Not all enemies are shot or knocked to the ground. Some characters can lift foes and hurl them to their doom.



Baby fat

So what exactly is Messiah? It is, quite simply, a 3D thirdperson action adventure game with a refreshingly unique twist: the main character sidesteps the inability to wield any tools of mass destruction by being able to possess the bodies of characters that can. It will also feature some of the most advanced character artificial intelligence ever seen in a game.

But casting a chubby little cherub as the game's protagonist? Have Shiny realised that this may throw the gaming community at large off balance? "It's actually not been as much of a problem as you

seem a mere gimmick – a side dish to the main serving of shoot-em-up action – it is the driving force behind Messiah's gameplay, and is an aspect that brings an incredible amount of depth to the fray.

Players will have to think carefully as to how best make use of the many possessable characters in Messiah. There are forty different types in the game, ranging from placid yet potent hermits to weaponless prostitutes, synthetic behemoths that can dismember you in the blink of an eye, to cops with the unfortunate habit of shooting first and asking questions later. Aesthetic

"...SYNTHETIC BEHEMOTHS THAT CAN DISMEMBER YOU IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE..."

might expect," asserts Producer Stuart Roch. "Initially, our biggest problem was that people who had not played the game didn't like the idea of playing as a cherub. When gamers think of a hero protagonist they think of space marines or Duke Nukem. We threw gamers a bit of a curve in Messiah, as Bob is more of an anti-hero protagonist who is not too thrilled about having the unenviable job of cleaning up earth. But as people played the game, they really became attached to Bob's personality and appearance. Gabe (Gabriel Rountree, Lead Animator) did some great animations for Bob which really make him appear cute. In the end people, those that have played the game have ended up really caring about Bob."

Pick a soul

As mentioned, Bob has the unearthly ability to possess other characters' souls (see "Possession Session"). While this may at first

considerations aren't the priority, though. As a prostitute, Bob has no weapons, but will be quite able to walk past hypnotised security guards into areas usually off-limits. Possessing a cop has obvious advantages, as they have access to a range of deadly firearms. As a behemoth, Bob need not concern himself with finding ammunition – his host can sustain much more damage and has enough brute strength to tear people apart, limb by limb – even tear through barriers like metal doors.

While players will have the freedom to choose a more visceral path through Messiah, the game will reward players more partial to exploration with an impressive amount of depth, detail and flexibility. There are countless numbers of items to interact with, and given a bit of experimentation, a whole manner of different paths to take to complete a mission objective. "Players will want to take some

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF BOB...

Find the key, run to the exit and shoot a few texture-mapped polygons along the way? Not in Messiah. Yielding the ability to possess, our hero Bob gets the chance to saunter into all sorts of places he normally couldn't.

In his natural state, Bob is pretty bloody ineffectual. Coming across a couple of workers, Bob knows that these guys don't have the security clearance to get out of the immediate area, but that medics do. Noticing that one of the workers is lying underneath a huge piece of machinery – with a switch operating the pulley situated conveniently nearby. As Bob can't use the switch, he possesses the mobile worker and flicks the switch, bringing the mass of metal down onto the hapless comrade. Soon after, a medic arrives to tend to the wounded – a perfect opportunity for Bob to make a quick exit and possess the recent newcomer. As the medic, Bob has a higher level of security access and strolls into the next area, where he encounters another road-block – a cop and further security restrictions. Ahh... this cop has security clearance! That vessel looks mighty tempting...



POSSESSION SESSION

The actual act of possession is straightforward enough - simply jump "into" a body (hitting the jump key whilst pointing in the direction of the selected host). Once you've entered a new host, you pretty much gain instant control. When de-possessing however, the process will leave the host slightly dazed and confused - and sometimes a tad hostile.

The only other nuance in this process is relative to the difficulty setting chosen at the beginning of the game. As the difficulty level increases, the arc in which you can possess a body decreases, meaning that you'll have to be far more nimble to be successful - especially considering that most of the time a potential host is going to try to keep you in its sights as much as possible.

Possession is also a source of health for Bob. Each time he jumps into another's body, he gains some of their health. Shiny decided early in the development cycle that they wanted to minimize, if not eliminate, health packs and the like "floating and rotating" in space.

And to make sure that players don't get confused as to who they happen to be controlling in the thick of the action, a rather inconspicuous halo hovers above the head of the Bob's (usually) unwilling host.

time to look around and explore the possibilities a bit more than if they were playing a standard action-shooter," explains Roch. "It's pretty interesting to possess a Welder, for instance, and try out some of his skills, and see what they can do to the environment. The Welder can repair broken machines and access workstations that other characters can't. And it's pretty cool when the player walks up to a Cop as a Welder: the Cop will notice that you're away from your workstation and order you to get back to work. If you continue to poke around places you shouldn't be and don't get back to work, the Cop will eventually lose patience and resort to more harsh methods to keep you out of places you shouldn't be. But if they spot you as Bob, they're not going to be anywhere near as polite."

So will all characters set out to put a violent end to your quest the instant you hit their sights? "No, not everyone," replies Roch. "Cops and Chots tend to be quite aggressive toward Bob while other characters like Workers and Scientists react completely

differently. If Bob appears in front of a Worker they tend to try to shoo him away rather than adopting a shoot first, ask questions later mentality."

The other aspect to consider when riding another person's soul is that each of the groups of characters in Messiah have detailed and wide-ranging personality traits, behavioural sets





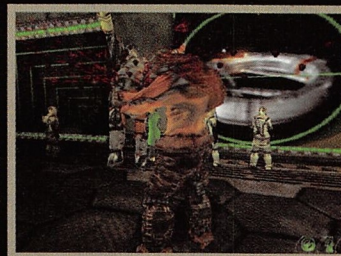
(Shiny have thrown in the whole spectrum here, from courageousness to pathetic cowardice) and scripted responses to certain situations. For example, the Chots are a group of human sewer dwellers that hunt their prey in packs, but they never turn on each other. Should you possess their leader, you have in your control a deadly arsenal – being able to pick targets for your pack to attack. However, should you set a fellow Chot as the target (who may be in the way of your next objective), the remaining pack will turn on you instead for breaking accepted hunting behaviours. Cops are a much more straightforward affair. Drawing weapons on senior officers will certainly arouse suspicion and command a few bullets your way.

Only by yourself

Given the complexity and implications of the possession mechanic in Messiah, one can only but begin to wonder what kind of multiplayer experience this could produce. Shiny are aware that there are inherent problems in creating a multiplayer version of Messiah, so much so



that the once planned multiplayer expansion may not even see the light of day. "We are not currently planning to do a multi-player version of the game," continues Roch. "It would be much more than your standard deathmatch scenario when you consider the possession mechanic. Imagine walking into a room with a bunch of characters going about their business and you don't really know who your enemy is! Has the other player possessed the worker, or maybe the scientist? If you saw a prostitute walk in with a flame-thrower you might have a tip! Multiplayer Messiah would be unlike any other multi-player game out on the market today. While we haven't completely decided not to do a version in the future, the flexibility of the game combined with the fact that we



would want to do it right, make it a difficult decision."

Bobbing

Messiah is indeed an ambitious project. Shiny have promised to deliver a 3D action shooter with a next-generation graphics engine and an example of what AI can do that other developers are only beginning to explore. More than anything, they've promised the gaming world an action shooter that strays far from convention and delivers an unparalleled gaming experience. What we've seen so far indicates that Shiny will succeed – they haven't failed us yet. At least we won't have to wait long to find out – a March release is definite. Look for the PowerPlay review in the next issue.

March Stepnik

TECHNO BABBLE - Realtime Deformation & Tessellation

It was at the Computer Game Developers Conference of 1998 where Dave Perry, President of Shiny and project leader on Messiah, explained the game's atypical creative direction: "I care passionately about characters. Yet, like most other developers we found ourselves focused on backgrounds and lighting... Then we realised how little attention our character technology was actually getting. The Messiah engine created that attention."

And so, Messiah created the tools from scratch to help them realise their ambitious vision of a game. So what is the Messiah engine all about then? The most publicised aspect of the Messiah engine is Real Time Deformation and Tessellation (RT-DAT). Ahh... in English?

Deformation

This technique is used to add a far more lifelike quality to textures modelled on 3D wireframe characters (ie, "skins" on character models) when in motion. Ever noticed how sections of typical polygon

characters tend to disappear into each other (for example, the upper thigh disappearing into the lower torso when a character walks)? In Messiah, character wireframes are covered with textures that behave much like the skin on our own bodies – they stretch and deform during movement. Breasts jiggle, hips sway, and people move in perhaps the most convincing way yet experienced in a computer game.

Tessellation

Realtime tessellation scales the number of polygons on screen to keep the action running at a minimum rate of 30 frames per second – the accepted minimum for smooth gameplay. So as more high polygon-count items (like characters, for example) become visible on screen, the Messiah engine starts reducing the number of polygons per character to ensure the machine doesn't choke and the action on screen doesn't begin to stutter.

This works well especially in the area of depth. As characters move into the distance

on screen, the number of polygons are reduced. As they move closer, the polygons increase. The realtime aspect is integral to the effectiveness of this technology. While varying the polygon count of characters in relation to their distance has been done before (usually in three increments – close, medium and far), the processor was tasked with a high polygon increase hit, producing slowdown. With realtime tessellation, the gradual increase of instructions sent to the processor virtually eliminates slowdown – spreading the increase incrementally instead of in large lumps.

But this is not the sum total of the Real Time Tessellation engine – and much industry praise. Shiny have coded the engine such that the removal of polygons in high traffic areas is far more economical. Usually, the culling of polygons is random, explaining the sudden absence of a section of a character's anatomy on screen. Messiah's engine removes polygons from areas of a model least visible to the player first, minimising this visually disruptive phenomenon.

Fig.1 - 3282 polygons



Fig.1 - 1204 polygons

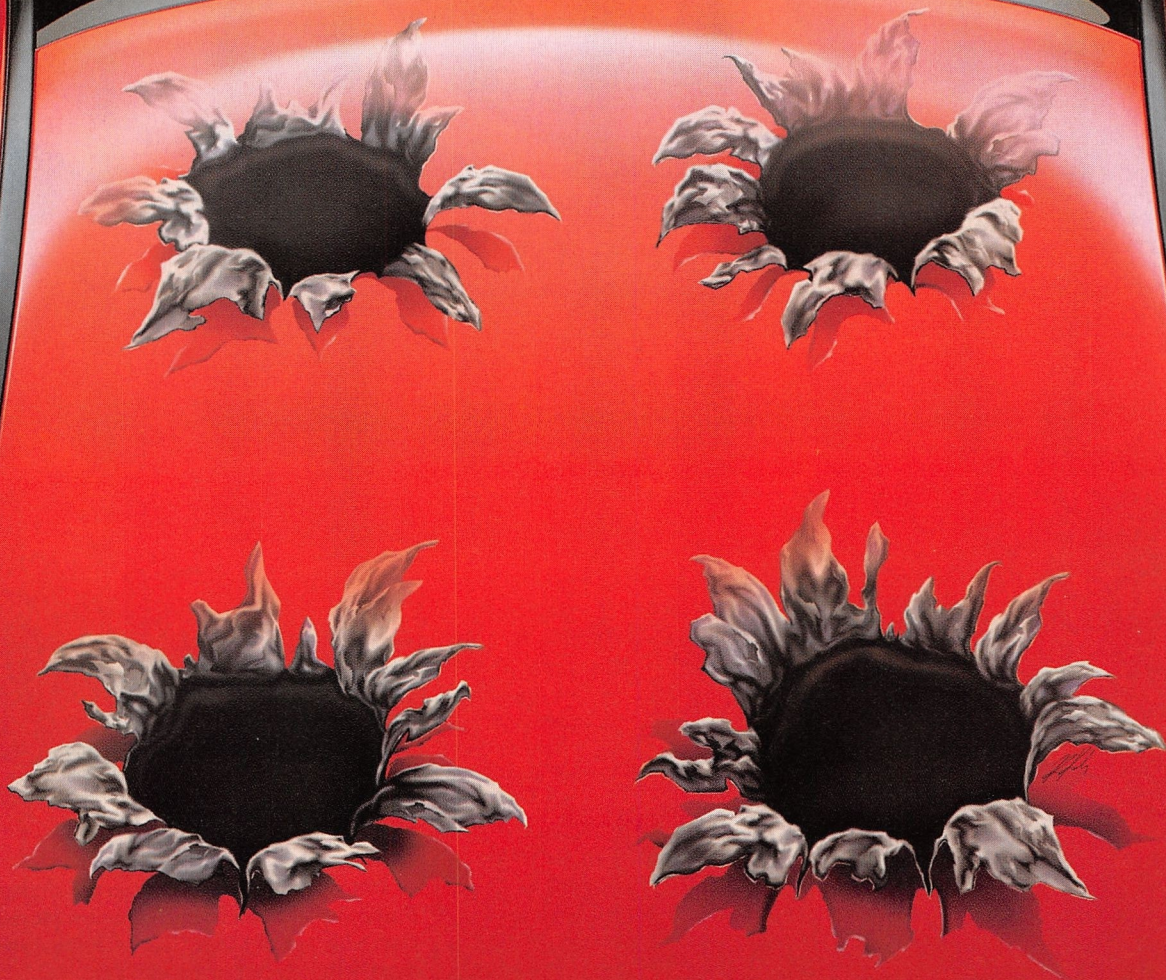


Fig.1 - 809 polygons



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the best of 1999

While we count your votes for the Game of the Year Awards, we thought we'd share with you our selection of the best games 1999 had to offer.

OVERALL GAME

1. SYSTEM SHOCK 2 (MS)

Into this rich gaming concoction Irrational Games added a pinch of everything. The action of a firstperson shooter. The character development of an RPG. The strategy of a squad-based shooter. The world interaction of, well... of nothing we've yet encountered. The plot of an epic adventure game. The tension and horror of a scary movie. And the everyday drama of real life.

While 1999 was undoubtedly a fantastic year for games, it was System Shock 2 that provided an absorbing gaming experience a definite cut above anything else. The way you froze and anticipated with bated breath the next direct transmission from the dubious Janice Polito in those precious seconds after the chilling email alert.

Just how nervous you were - nay, how shit-scared you were as you hit the elevator button and ascended into the unknown. The sheer terror inflicted upon your worn and battered constitution by the shrieking of a monkey - and that's just watching the nature channel! And the way you could exercise your

System Shock 2

cowardice and put off the inevitable by playing Overworld on your PDA. Ahh, System Shock 2: thanks for the memories...

2. AGE OF EMPIRES II: AGE OF KINGS

In a year of mixed success on the strategy front, Bruce Shelley and Ensemble Studios proved a different class with Age of Kings. This is realtime strategy that most definitely improved with age.

3. QUAKE III: ARENA

With the third Quake iteration, id only confirmed their grip on the deathmatch crown. Simply, Q3A demands so much more skill than its rivals, such is the purity of its gameplay.

4. ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

Initially innocuous, this deceptively deep sim slowly reveals unforeseen layers of strategic cunning the more you play. Plus it's got rollercoasters. Which are great.

5. GP500

Shocking though it may seem, the year's best driving or racing sim arrived on two wheels instead of four. Painstakingly accurate in all aspects, GP500 is truly the Mick Doohan of motorsport sims.

GRAPHICS



Quake III Arena



Homeworld

1. QUAKE III: ARENA

While an id release always manages to set new standards of excellence in PC visuals, Q3A's position in the number one spot was never guaranteed - 1999 has been a bumper year for lush visual masterpieces. However, appearing just before Xmas, it was clear Q3A shines brighter than any other title.

Quake III: Arena's graphics engine is exceptional. Forget the curved surfaces - the great variety and complexity of textures used in the game had us all here at PCPP utterly captivated. The number of frags relinquished as a result of stopping to admire the scenery

are too many to recount. And it's the minor touches - like the way the torso tilts when a player aims towards the purple yonder - that elevate Q3A above the rest.

2. HOMEWORLD

Who didn't spend hours roaming the camera around instead of fighting? Such is the thrall in which Relic's masterpiece still holds us.

3. RE-VOLT

The best looking racing game on the PC. It's that simple.



SOUND

1. SYSTEM SHOCK 2

The Looking Glass audio department surpassed themselves with System Shock 2. Following on from Thief, here is another world that responds to every noise the player made - gunfire, footsteps, the opening or closing of doors. Some PCPP staff recall not even daring to breathe while they crouched in the darkness, low on health and ammo, as a mutant cyborg patrolled nearby. Less crucial to the gameplay, but just as important to the atmosphere is the nightmarish array of speech and effects to be heard. The crew members' logs, the various robots' chatter, and the groans and cries from enemies all contribute to an aural experience that's impossible to forget.



2. OMIKRON: THE NOMAD SOUL

Mainly for the touch of class provided by the Bowie-scored soundtrack, though the voice acting wasn't far behind.

MULTIPLAYER

1. STARSIEGE: TRIBES

With its virtually flawless melding of deathmatch action with superlative team coordination and cooperation, Tribes surpasses traditional greats like Team Fortress and Quake II. The incredible number of different roles that players can adopt, allowing them to specialise in particular tasks or act as all-rounders,



INNOVATION



1. HOMEWORLD

Surely Relic Entertainment's extension of realtime strategy action - a genre which has only carefully and minimally evolved since Westwood's Dune 2 - into a true three-dimensional plane will remain as Homeworld's most renowned contribution to gaming. However, this transition to 3D is not the all-pervasive reason why Homeworld is the most original game of 1999. It is that Relic have delivered a game so fluid, so seamless - the way missions blend into one

guarantees widespread appeal. Perhaps most importantly, it plays as smooth as silk over the net, in spite of its impressive visuals. Capture the Flag fans have never had it so good, and thousands still play Tribes on a daily basis, happily ignoring more recent titles while waiting with bated breath for Tribes 2.

2. QUAKE III: ARENA

The most adrenaline-pumping deathmatch around, backed up by the tightest multiplayer code. It must be Quake.

3. TOCA 2

The bash-and-barge nature of touring cars is perfectly suited to a networked evening.

another and aren't interrupted by bothersome mission briefing screens, for example - that has so effortlessly elevated Homeworld above the slew of mediocre and mostly unimaginative titles of the last 12 months. The end result is a strategy game which plays like no other, and delivers an epic experience fitting the grandeur of its setting.

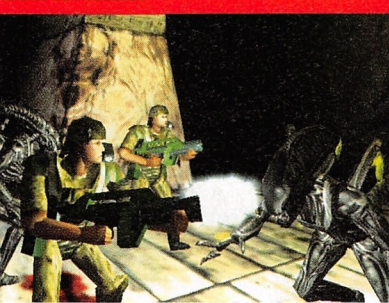
2. MIDTOWN MADNESS

Kudos to Microsoft's energising racer for doing away with circuit-based tracks. It's more fun causing pile-ups anyway.

3. OMIKRON: THE NOMAD SOUL

Quantic Dream's sublime action/adventure captivates by (quite literally) capturing your soul. Ingenious.

Aliens vs Predator



3. ALIENS VS PREDATOR

At its best, AVP is a harrowing experience thanks in large part to the blood-curdling fx.

best of

HERE'S A RUNDOWN OF THE PCPP CREW'S PERSONAL FAVES FOR THE YEAR.



Quake III Arena

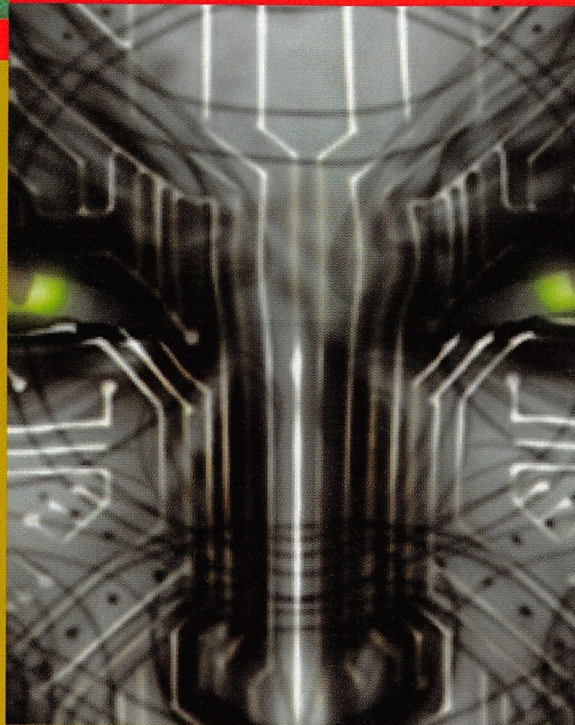
JOHN DEWHURST

Quake 3
Rollercoaster Tycoon
Big Race USA
Alpha Centauri
Homeworld

Homeworld



System Shock 2



MARCH STEPNIK

System Shock 2
Dungeon Keeper 2
Madden 2000
X-Wing Alliance
Big Race USA

DAVID WILDGOOSE

System Shock 2
The Nomad Soul
Gabriel Knight 3
Quake 3
Re-Volt

MALCOLM CAMPBELL

Quake 3
Final Fantasy 8 (PSX)
Caesar 3
Re-Volt
System Shock 2

BEN MANSILL

Unreal Tournament
TOCA 2
Age of Empires 2
Heroes of Might & Magic 3
Quake 3



CHRISTIAN READ

Shadowman
Soul Reaver
Discworld Noir
Age of Empires 2
Gabriel Knight 3

MAJOR DES McNICHOLAS

Rogue Spear
Age of Empires 2
Mig Alley
Unreal Tournament
Force 21

EDWARD FOX

GP500
TOCA 2
Freespace 2
Flight Sim 2000
Nascar 3

ELIH BRADING

Quake 3
Unreal Tournament
NFS: High Stakes
HL: Opposing Force
Age of Empires 2

TIMOTHY C. BEST

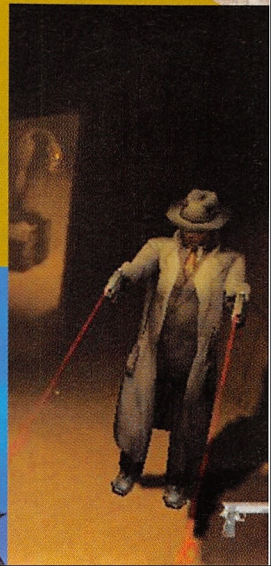
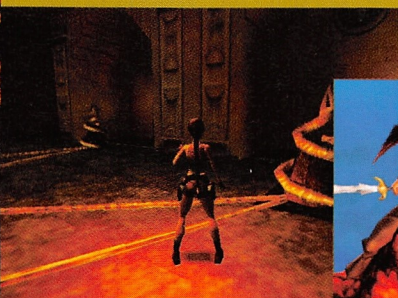
System Shock 2
Tales of the Sword Coast
Age of Empires 2
Quake 3
Alpha Centauri

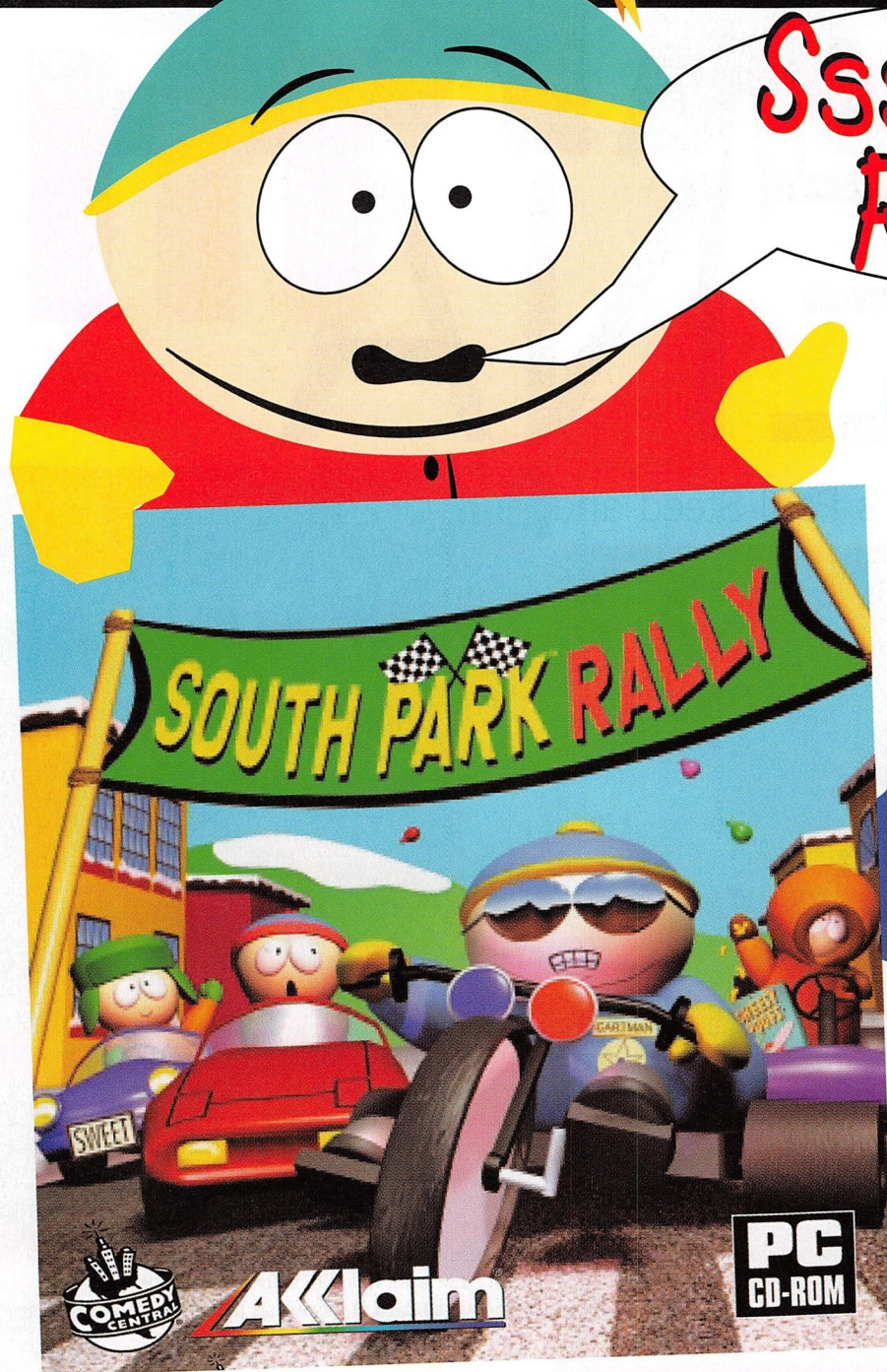
HARRY MARAGOS

Unreal Tournament
Grand Theft Auto 2
Quake 3
Age of Empires 2
TA: Kingdoms

BRETT ROBINSON

Aliens Vs Predator
System Shock 2
The Nomad Soul
Starsiege Tribes
Jagged Alliance 2





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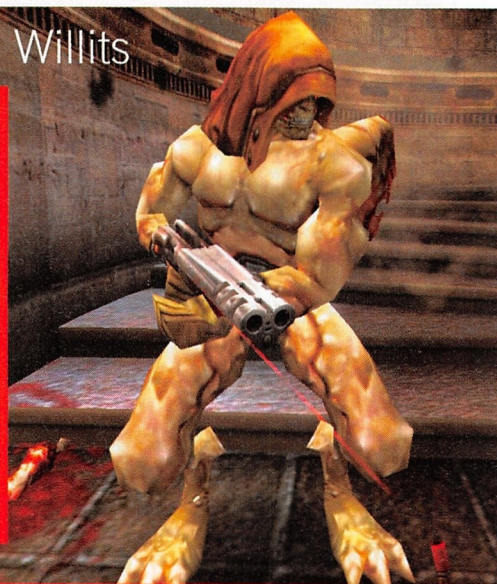
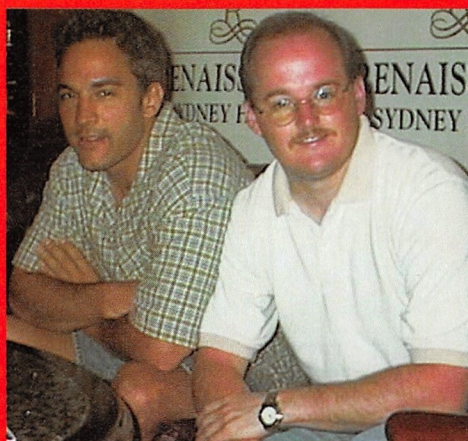
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QUAKE ARENA

An audience with id Software's Paul Steed and Tim Willits

Without fail, Willits and Steed make the long journey out from their bunker in Texas, USA to Australia to sing praise about their latest 3D masterpiece. PCPP's Ben Mansill (in one of his last escapades as editor) and Elih Brading met with Paul Steed (Q3A artist) and Tim Willits (level designer) to talk about game design and technology, being id staffers, and getting to work with your mum.



Elih: Quake III Arena looks and feels absolutely stunning. Has it exceeded your expectations?

Tim: Oh, we're very happy with how game turned out. We put a lot of very hard work into making Q3A what it is. You'd be surprised how many people see the end result as simple - that making a firstperson shooter is a piece of cake. They don't realise just how much work it really is.

Ben: As an artist, your ideas of what your day-to-day job might involve when you started might now have been overridden by the requirements to work with new technologies. Every single thing you do you have to look at the technological capabilities and look at a bunch of different ways that an objective must be accomplished. Do you find that a burden?

Paul: No. That's what I like about the job, it's a challenge to evolve. It's a challenge and that's why I do it. I helped John shape the animation system in Q3A just as much as he created the thing. You have to deal with the limitation of what you're been handed out. Tim has to start chopping the maps down to fit within whatever limits we have and I have to



Tramampoline!



Paul's alter-ego (unconfirmed).

optimise the models down to a certain state. That's the pure artform of it - to me, pulling off a 400 polygon character that looks like it's 800 polygons. That's the best part of the job I think.

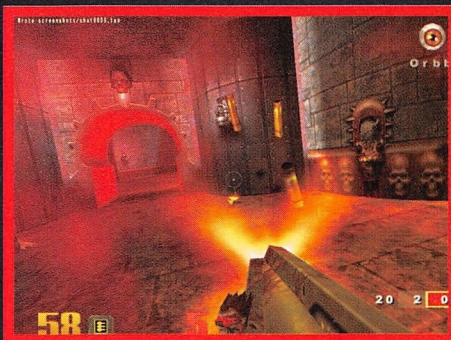
Tim: Lots of people say "I can't be creative because I'm stuck with 200 polygons," but that's not true. If you're truly a creative person who works hard at it, you can make things look very cool with so little polygons.

Paul: That's what separates id, I think from a lot of developers: the perseverance of the staff. We have the limitations, yet we're still determined to make it the best out there, you know, despite the limitations.

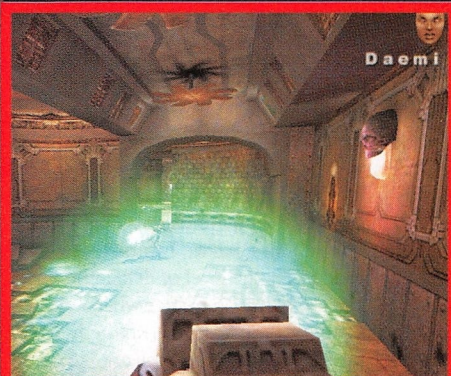
Ben: We get the impression that you work very much as a team, with a lot of crossover. Everybody doing different things, different aspects, different departments...

Tim: Yes but it's the design people that actually decide on the game.

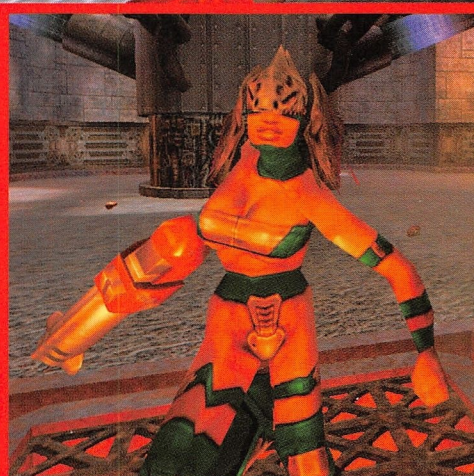
Ben: Are there any one-off examples of anything really out of your standard that you've been asked to do on this project - on Quake III Arena



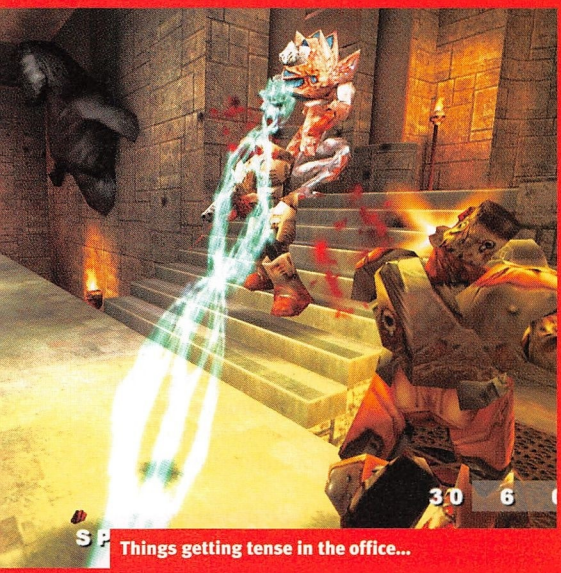
Paul: Sound, I had to help with some of the effects in the game. I also helped with some aspects of the map editor, which was a tad confusing at first - mostly it was just modelling the statues you see in the game. It was a fight with John, I was campaigning for things in the map editor that they wanted a long time ago, and in the map editor when I started using it I'd go "Why the heck are you doing it like this? This is goofy! Why do you do it like this?" Tim would come to me and go - "Make me a boulder" and I'm like ching, ching, ching <simulates computer operation> and he goes "Ahh, I hate you." You know, to do something as simple as making a geomorphic looking



Steam-cleaning



Hunter in a rare, candid moment...



Things getting tense in the office...

boulder - and so, it was kind of an odd experience for me to deal with the map editor. But Kenneth especially, he and Kevin Cloud jumped on both feet and would experiment with all these shader effects and brush stuff - that really helped to augment my skills, working with them.

Tim: Kevin, throughout a lot of maps, reworked major areas in the game environment.

Paul: Involving artists in level design makes sense because we get to the point where we're getting more polygons to work with, more and more texture resolution, more and more effects to work with. You have to have someone trained as an artist I think really enhance a level.

Tim: The lines between artist, designer, modeller are starting to get fuzzy.

Ben: What about John Carmack - we get the idea from reading his .plans and the general feeling around the place is that he's there purely making a kick-arse 3D engine and then handing on the technology he's created for you guys to make a game out of it. Is he into game design input, what is his role in it?

Paul: Well, he sends a lot of e-mails <laughs>.

Tim: John has very clear natured goals. He's

very idealistic in his design philosophy and he has some very clear ideas on what he wants to see.

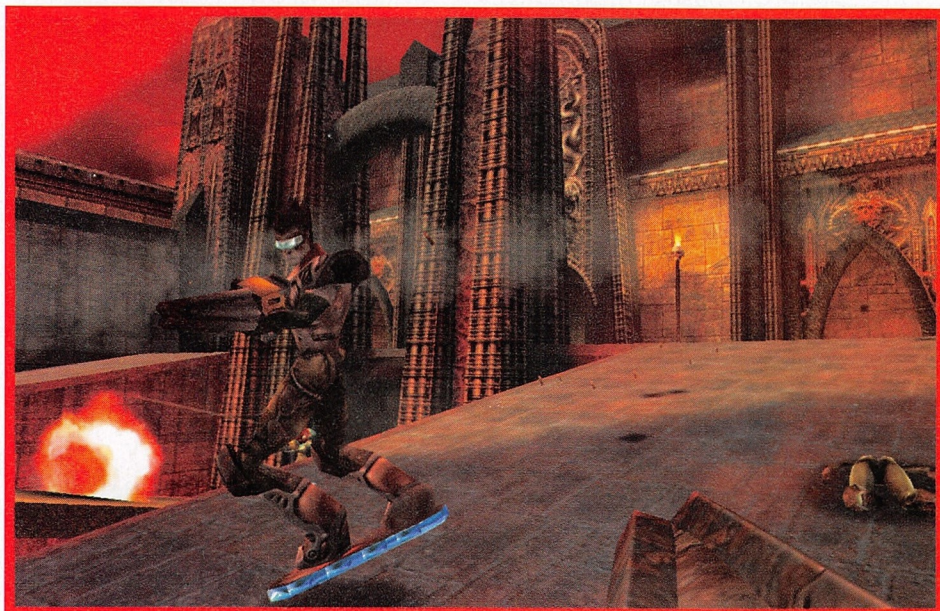
Paul: He's the mad scientist and tinkerer kind of guy. If he's into it - it'll be cool.

Eli: What about the two jump limitation that Carmack introduced? That would be one exception wouldn't it?

Paul: Yeah, but only because so many people bitched and moaned about it.

Ben: So what are you guys going to work on next?

Paul: We're going to a mission pack for Q3A, and Graeme's going to come up with the next game. We're talking about to doing a suspense thing. We're looking to doing something that'll have those jump-out-of-your-seat moments. But we can't say any more than that <smiles>.



Elih: What sort of power and flexibility will you guys have to work with?

Paul: We basically won't have a limit. So we'll have dynamic LODs and skeletal animation systems so the data stored won't be a problem. By the time we come out, the average machine should be beefier.

Tim: That's true - you need to have a four times increase in polygons to see and notice the difference in architecture and we'll have that.

Paul: Both the world and the characters are unlikely to have a set limit because most of the dynamic LOD system... With dynamic LOD (Level-Of-Detail) the characters as they get closer to you will dial-in more and more resolution, with 5,000-10,000 face characters. I'm working on a model right now based off the Angel. Right now she's on 6,000 polygons and I haven't even done her arms - so she'll be over 10,000.

She's going to be my test case for dialling out to zero - when they're just visible there's only going to be like 100-200 polygons.

Ben: Realistically, there's got to be a finite polygon count.

Paul: Why - why does there have to be?

Ben: Hardware.

Paul: Yeah, but right now, if you look at Q3A, we're getting an average of 10,000 polygons.

Tim: In a scene, yeah - we hang out at around 10,000.

Paul: If you look at the other games coming out, yeah there is going to be a hardware cap, but literally, the in-view polygon count is likely to double to about 20,000. But that depends on how developers lay the architecture. With a

dynamic LOD system, it's automatic. As you get closer, the texture resolution and graphical detail changes - Lionhead studios, developers of Black and White have a really good system where you can go from a worm in an apple and you can zoom out and see the planet - that's how you do this kind of thing. You still have a set number of polygons you can see, but it gets allocated to different areas because of the LOD.

Ben: What do you think about a fairly low-resolution presentation, say 1024x768, yet the game is packed with tonnes of detail and effects, versus much higher resolution with maximum speed? In particular, what do you think of the whole nVidia versus Voodoo schools of thought? GeForce's high resolutions with tonnes of effects, while Voodoo does higher res, but with a ultra-fast framerate?

Paul: Well, it depends on what type of game you have. If you have a game where you can appreciate small details - if you have time to appreciate, yeah - if you just want an action game, you've gotta have speed there. So it doesn't matter what the resolution is - you just have to make it fit the environment. That's the one thing I like about Quake3, I think that we really succeeded in is the level of detail, the resolution fits the game no matter what you're playing it at. Look at the textures (Kenneth Scott did the textures) - our texture pages are 156x256 for the body, 128x64/128 for the head - people slurp it down as high-res, but it's not. The thing about Kenneth's work is that it fits the model so that you're tricked into thinking it's high-res - he gets such good coverage that when I developed the cinematics for Q3A, I'd use the same skin - a low res skin - but I just put a bump map on, a specular map and a lot more polygons on it. But it was still essentially the same model that was in the game. So the resolution doesn't have to be 1024x1024 textures on the wall if you have the geometry. If it's either/or, I'd rather have the geometry than the texture space to be honest, because then you can get shadows.

Tim: Look at this way - it's pure and simple to make a box, then have an artist come in and wallpaper it, but it's very difficult to actually make an environment out of architecture.

Paul: Here's a good analogy: do you ever see computer art sometimes and it looks too clean, like (picks up the PCPP digital camera) this is a pretty good piece of technology right? It's in a cool box and everything, but if you look at it, all the edges are rounded. Now if I were to create this on the computer, it would be a box and I'd just put a texture on it right? But if you compared the two side by side, a box would



notice the difference - especially when a light swings by. You know, a light swings by and you see all these little glints off the corner and the divits and the crevices and everything, so if you have an environment where there's dynamic lighting, you then want geometry because it's so subtle, so subliminal, that the effect that shadows and highlights have on your appreciation for the environment that who cares if there's a 512x512 texture on that thing, because you still know it's a box.

Elih: Tim, how fast did you adapt to the Quake3 engine, like the curved surfaces and other point-to-point technologies?

Tim: Initially a lot of it came slowly, first you got snap to grid, then you had curved surfaces and you were able to use more polygons - so it wasn't like we had everything all at once. So we evolved with the technology, but working on Quake3 maps is technologically more difficult than any engines beforehand. The shader effects, the curves correctly so that they don't break up with geometry around them and just the general philosophy of making it pure deathmatch sort of environment was relatively difficult.

Paul: When Tim first started working with curves, he built this cathedral, only because they had to have a test case to see what could be done. He kind of set the style for a lot of the other designers and that cathedral was so nice and literally he was bitching the whole time because he would be using an imperfect tool. He was often stay in the office all night just trying to get the thing to work.

I think people are going to be surprised how hard it is: the learning curve is a little bit steep, but then once you get it you can make it sing.

Elih: How fast do you think the community will adapt to it?

Tim: You'll see many imperfections. They'll throw a curve up and not match the poly of the curve. You'll see a lot of bad maps - there'll be clipping issues, there'll be technical issues, there'll be art issues, texture issues. There'll be a lot more crap released this time around because of this, but the people that actually work hard at it, learn to do it right, will easily shine above everyone else.

Ben: John Carmack and the programming guru thing. In any IT industry, if you asked anyone to name their programming guru, they'd mention John Carmack. How does he feel about being worshipped like this?

Paul: He knows it, he loves it, and he counts on it. He has to be considered the number one guy - it's an important part of his psychological make up. He takes it very seriously, so that's why he keeps coming up with the goods. Being the best is what drives him. He is the man.

On a personal level, he doesn't lie, he tells it like it is. It's a handicap on occasions, but sometimes he doesn't understand the nuances and subtleties of social interaction. He'll say to me things like "You can't call your girlfriend a bitch." <laughs>.

Ben: Paul, you do seem stir up a lot of trouble from time to time, and you've personally fought for the removal of PC in the world of PC. Do you get nasty email from mums?

Paul: Nah! I get nothing but very very feel good "we love" you emails. The message board people don't like me, so I like to go on there and stir up some trouble. But the focus shouldn't be on me. I'll walk in on Tim writing a .plan update and I'll be like "Dude! That's kinda risky, you know!" <laughs>. I've come to the conclusion that everything will be taken out of context, so why keep it up?

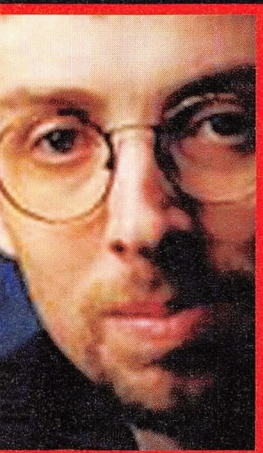
But regarding all the attention we do receive, you know, it's so odd for us to see computer game development turning into this kinda eclectic, fan-based thing where people are drawing analogies between developers and musicians and stuff like that. To me, that's the most craziest thing, because we sit in a room all day - a dark room - by ourselves, being geeked-out keyboard jockeys. People want to glamorise that, and I think that's amazing. We appreciate all the attention, but really, we're just ordinary guys.

Ben: Donna - the id Mom. That's a pretty unique job description in any industry, and she's seems to be gathering a following of her own. Who came up with that, and what's the job involve?

Paul: She is exactly the id mother. She treats us like we're her boys - she covers our butts, and looks after us in all the little ways we can barely manage.

She's the kind of person that gives and gives and gives without any thought of getting anything in return. And she cares about everyone who walks through our door, no matter who they are. It's very inspiring - it makes you wanna be nicer. We just love her.

Ben: Okay guys, that wraps it up. Thanks a lot.



DEVINE INTERVENTION

With the brothers Steed and Willits off trotting the globe, PCPP spoke with Graeme Devine, Q3A's game designer, from id Software HQ in Mesquite, Texas.

PCPP: Were the bots (and especially their A.I.) a major hurdle in Quake 3's development? And were they introduced as the singleplayer element only after criticism of the 'multiplayer-only' announcement early on?

Devine: It was always the intention for Q3A to have a strong single player component. We found with Q1 and Q2 that people enjoyed deathmatch, so bringing that experience into the solo game seemed like a good idea. I think a lot of people thought the game was multiplayer only after the release of the test. The bots were actually a fun part of

the project to develop, it's hard to program 32 individual characters, but I think we did an admirable job of creating realistic characters for the game.

PCPP: Do you think bots will play a stronger role in future multiplayer gaming?

Devine: We'll see what happens with Q3A in the medium term. From what I've seen I think they will provide a stronger role in single player games!

PCPP: The .plan updates from the id guys have been pretty extensive, and mostly very informative. Does John Carmack write his to be indecipherable intentionally, so people will stop bugging him and just let him make the damn game?

Devine: If you read them backwards they make perfect sense!

PCPP: At the time you joined id, we recall statements (from yourself) along the lines of: "Graham Devine was hired to expand id's horizons beyond the straitlaced FPS genre." Is

this still the case, if it ever was?

Devine: I'm more the team coach than the guy on the horizon. We'll wait and see what happens next!

PCPP: There's now an attitude among a growing number of gamers that id is really a game technology company. Thus, instead of buying Quake 3, these gamers would rather wait to see what Valve or Xatrix or whoever will do with your engine. What's your response to this situation? Is it a concern?

Devine: That's a real compliment. We actually look forward to seeing what other companies do with the engine as well. But over three quarters of the people at id work on the game, not on the technology. I think our previous games speak for themselves.

PCPP: What's next for id software in terms of game design (as opposed to game technology)?

Devine: Wait and see;

SCORE LIST

The screenshots suffer severe casualties as the text marches on!

GAME	SCORE		ISSUE		GAME		SCORE		ISSUE		GAME		SCORE		ISSUE	
101st Airborne	71	#33	Battle at Ardennes	86	#17	Close Combat	72	#5	Duke 3D Plutonium Pack	80	#16					
3D Mini Golf	80	#14	Battle Cruiser 3000AD	78	#12	Close Combat 2	90	#18	Duke Nukem 3D	90	#3					
3D Ultra Mini Golf Deluxe	60	#30	Battle of Britain	62	#38	Close Combat 3	88	#35	Dune 2000	87	#28					
3D Ultra Pinball	77	#21	Battleground 8: Waterloo	78	#22	Cluedo	71	#34	Dungeon Keeper	85	#16					
3rd Reich	82	#12	Battleground Antietam	83	#11	Clyde's Revenge	69	#6	Dungeon Keeper: Deeper	60	#22					
688i Nuclear Sub	90	#16	Battleground Ardennes	67	#2	Colin McRae Rally	94	#30	Dungeon Keeper 2	90	#41					
7th Legion	53	#19	Battleground Bull Run	75	#15	Comanche 3	80	#14	Earth 2140	86	#16					
A-10 Cuba!	65	#11	Battleground Napoleon	75	#15	Comanche Gold	85	#27	Earthsiege 2	85	#2					
Abe's Exoddus	86	#32	Battleground Shiloh	84	#6	Combat Chess	70	#20	Eastern Front	75	#22					
Abe's Oddyssey	90	#18	Battleground Waterloo	67	#4	Commandos	82	#28	Eastern Front II	85	#39					
Abomination	81	#44	Battleship	71	#15	Commandos: Call of Duty	83	#38	Echelon	15	#31					
Abuse	25	#2	Battlespire	54	#30	Complete Carriers at War	61	#2	Ecstatica 2	86	#1					
Acclaim's D	80	#1	Battlezone	90	#22	Conquest of the New World	71	#2	Egypt 1156 BC	77	#26					
Achtung Spitfire	80	#22	Beast Wars	43	#26	Constructor	84	#15	Eidos Official F1	65	#39					
Actua Golf 2	73	#23	Beasts and Bumpkins	92	#18	Constructor: Street Wars	74	#39	Elk Moon Murder	65	#5					
Actua Soccer	54	#16	Beat The House 2	76	#23	Corsairs	65	#40	Enemy Infestation	76	#30					
Actua Tennis	84	#32	Beavis and Butthead	68	#36	Creatures	85	#8	Enemy Nations	69	#17					
Addiction Pinball	90	#27	Bedlam	68	#8	Creatures 2	86	#31	Entrepreneur	81	#22					
Adrenix	72	#29	Betrayal at Antara	71	#16	Cricket 97	87	#17	Episode 1 Racer	90	#39					
AFL	62	#10	Beyond Time	50	#30	Cricket World Cup '99	93	#38	Euro 96	85	#4					
AFL 98	94	#19	Big Hurt Baseball	79	#5	Croc	74	#22	European Air War	94	#31					
AFL 99	90	#34	Big Race Pinball	90	#33	Crusader: No Regret	95	#7	Everquest	90	#39					
Afterlife	81	#5	Big Red Racing	67	#2	Curse of Monkey Island	92	#21	Evidence	49	#20					
Age of Empires	93	#17	Bio Freaks	72	#28	Cutthroats	67	#43	Extractors	30	#5					
AOE: Rise of Rome	90	#33	Birthright	79	#17	Cyber Judas	43	#5	Extreme Assault	88	#17					
Age of Empires 2	94	#42	Black Dahlia	82	#24	Cyberball	6	#29	Extreme Games	60	#1					
Age of Sail	79	#13	Blackstone Chronicles	75	#37	Cyberstorm	91	#3	Extreme Tactics	61	#27					
Agent Armstrong	68	#16	Blade Runner	96	#19	Cyberstorm 2	68	#28	F-16	80	#17					
AH-64 Flashpoint Korea	92	#11	Blood	71	#14	Cyberstrike 2	83	#34	F-22 Lightning 2	80	#8					
AH-64D Longbow	86	#3	Blood 2	72	#34	Daggerfall	83	#8	F-22 Raptor	74	#22					
Air Warrior II	73	#12	Blood and Magic	86	#9	Dark Colony	60	#18	F/A-18 Hornet 3.0	78	#16					
Air Warrior III	92	#22	Blood Plasma	55	#21	Dark Earth	91	#19	F1 Manager	75	#8					
AI Unser Jr Arcade Racing	40	#3	Blue Ice	77	#10	Dark Reign	94	#14	F1 Racing Sim	79	#22					
Albion	70	#8	Boss Rally	5	#39	D.Reign: Rise of Shadowhand	80	#25	F16: Aggressor	69	#32					
Alien Earth	54	#27	Brainstorm	43	#9	Dark Seed 2	80	#3	F22 ADF	87	#21					
Alien Incident	68	#6	Braveheart	86	#42	Dark Side of the Moon	47	#36	F22 ADF: Red Sea	85	#27					
Alien Trilogy	51	#10	Breakneck	86	#39	Dark Vengeance	30	#36	F22 Lightning 3	85	#40					
Alien Virus	69	#5	Bridge Deluxe 2	85	#4	Darklight Conflict	89	#14	FA/18 E Carrier Strike Fighter	68	#30					
Aliens vs. Predator	96	#37	Broken Sword	89	#6	Darkstone	68	#42	FA Prem. League Stars	71	#42					
Alpha Centauri	96	#36	Broken Sword 2	80	#19	Davis Cup Tennis	17	#10	Fable	46	#10					
Alpha Centauri: Alien X-fire	83	#45	Bud Tucker	70	#3	Dawn of Aces	72	#36	Falcon 4.0	98	#33					
Amerzone	68	#42	Bug	53	#9	Daytona	60	#10	Fallen Haven	71	#13					
American Civil War	53	#5	Buggy	62	#33	Daytona USA Deluxe	25	#19	Fallout	89	#18					
Amok	79	#8	Burnout Drag Racing: PC	70	#35	Deadline	66	#5	Fallout 2	88	#32					
Anastasia	20	#27	C&C for Win 95	80	#14	Deadlock	74	#6	Fantasy General	82	#2					
Ancient Conquest	79	#35	C&C Sole Survivor	28	#23	Deadlock 2	78	#23	Fatal Abyss	54	#33					
Ancient Evil	72	#26	C&C: Red Alert	97	#8	Death Rally	83	#11	Fields of Fire	53	#29					
Andretti Racing	77	#21	C&C Red Alert: Counterstrike	69	#13	Deathkeep	30	#4	FIFA 97	69	#10					
ANNO 1602	71	#40	C&C Red Alert: The Aftermath	70	#19	Decathlon	20	#6	FIFA 98	95	#20					
Apache Havoc	84	#34	C&C Tiberian Sun	94	#41	Deer Hunter 2	55	#32	FIFA 99	92	#32					
Apache Longbow Gold	92	#13	Caesar III	88	#31	Delta Forces	91	#33	FIFA 2000	88	#45					
Arc of Time	75	#11	Caesar's Palace	75	#21	Descent 2	90	#1	FIFA Soccer Manager	71	#16					
Archimedean Dynasty	90	#9	Callahan`s Crosstime Saloon	80	#14	Descent 2 Infinite Abyss	89	#16	Fighter Pilot	71	#32					
ARL Rugby League 96	88	#4	Capitalism	40	#2	Descent 3	95	#38	Fighter Squadron	85	#37					
Armor Command	86	#25	Carmageddon	90	#15	Descent To Undermountain	31	#23	Fighting Force	70	#23					
Armoured Fist 2	82	#20	Carmageddon 2	92	#33	Descent: Freespace	93	#27	Fighting Steel	80	#41					
Army Men	85	#29	Cart: Precision Racing	84	#19	DF: Silent Threat	80	#32	Final Conflict	20	#24					
Army Men 2	79	#38	Castrol Honda Superbikes	89	#26	Destiny	37	#10	Final Doom	82	#6					
Asghan	43	#37	Castrol Superbikes 2000	85	#42	DethKarz	85	#31	Final Fantasy VII	90	#27					
Assassin 2015	55	#8	Cave Wars	72	#12	Deus	72	#11	Firefight	82	#5					
Assault Rigs	50	#1	Championship Manager 2	78	#10	Diablo	91	#11	Fleet Command	89	#39					
Asteroids	74	#33	Championship Manager 3	85	#38	Diablo: Hellfire	87	#22	Flight Unlimited II	89	#22					
ATF Gold	86	#13	Chaos Overlords	64	#3	Die by the Sword	92	#25	Flight Unlimited III	89	#43					
Atlantis	73	#17	Chasm: The Rift	60	#19	DBTS: Limb From Limb	79	#32	Flipout	73	#14					
Atmosphere	55	#2	Chess Master 4000 Turbo	86	#3	Die Hard Trilogy	80	#13	Fly!	85	#42					
Atomic Bomberman	72	#16	Chess Wars	70	#15	Dinotopia	55	#3	Flying Corps	76	#11					
Australian Cricket Captain	86	#36	Chronicles of the Sword	48	#3	Disciples	81	#43	Flying Corps Gold	74	#20					
Azrael's Tear	80	#8	City of Lost Children	74	#12	Discworld 2	88	#10	Forbidden City	74	#32					
Babe Ruth Baseball	60	#17	Civ 2 Fantastic Worlds	68	#21	Discworld Noir	83	#39	Force 21	90	#42					
Back to Baghdad	75	#5	Civ 2: Multiplayer + classic	90	#28	Dog Day	82	#13	Fork in the Tale	58	#13					
Bad Day on the Midway	70	#2	Civilization: Call To Power	96	#36	Dominion Storm	55	#31	Formula 1 3Dfx	77	#12					
Bad Mojo: the Roach Game	82	#2	Civ: Test of Time	81	#41	Dragon Dice	71	#17	Formula Karts	84	#19					
Baku Baku	89	#7	Civil War	84	#8	Dragon Lore 2	74	#11	Forsaken	93	#25					
Baldur's Gate	87	#35	Civil War 2: Generals	81	#22	Drakan	84	#43	Fox Sports NBA 2000	56	#44					
BG: Sword Coast	76	#41	Civilization 2	90	#1	Dreams to Reality	71	#19	FPS: Skiing	63	#24					
Balls Of Steel	89	#23	Clans	48	#42	Driver	71	#43	Fragile Allegiance	85	#10					
Bass Masters Classic	76	#28	Claw	62	#26	Duckman	73	#18	Freespace 2	95	#48					

GOLD: Games scoring 90-94%
PLATINUM: Games scoring 95-100%
GAME SCORE

Front Page Sports Golf	77	#18	Interstate '76 Arsenal	78	#25
Full Court Press	82	#7	Into the Void	86	#14
G-Nome	80	#15	Isis	32	#3
G-Police	92	#18	Israeli Air Force	90	#34
Gabriel Knight III	87	#44	Jack Nicklaus 5	89	#21
Galapagos	77	#19	Jack the Ripper	46	#6
Gangsters	85	#34	Jagged Alliance	83	#7
Gender Wars	72	#4	Jagged Alliance 2	89	#42
Gene Wars	86	#8	Jane's A.T.F.	72	#2
Get Medieval	61	#30	Jane's F-15	85	#25
Gettysburg	80	#1	Jane's USAF	86	#44
Gex	80	#7	Jazz Jackrabbit 2	65	#27
Gex 2: Enter the Gecko	87	#28	Jedi Knight	95	#18
Global Domination	63	#32	JK: Mysteries of the Sith	93	#23
Golf Pro 2000	65	#12	Jet Fighter 3	85	#10
Goosebumps	79	#10	Jet Fighter 3: Mission Disk	85	#15
GP 500	96	#43	Jet Moto	72	#22
Grand Prix 2	90	#1	Jetfighter: Full Burn	67	#32
Grand Prix Legends	95	#30	Jimmy White's Cueball 2	67	#38
Grand Theft Auto	65	#18	Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix	91	#30
Grand Theft Auto 2	84	#44	Joint Strike Fighter	85	#20
GTA London	75	#38	Jonah Lomu Rugby	45	#20
Grand Touring	60	#35	Journeyman Project 3	69	#22
Great Battles of Alexander	80	#17	Judge Dredd Pinball	82	#30
Great Battles of Hannibal	62	#23	Karma	20	#2
Grim Fandango	91	#31	King's Quest 8	85	#34
Gruntz	45	#37	Kingdom of Magic	69	#4
Guardians of Darkness	30	#41	Kingpin	86	#41
Gulf War: Desert Hammer	55	#45	KKnD	90	#7
Half Life	98	#31	KKnD 2: Krossfire	65	#28
Half-Life: Opposing Force	90	#45	KKnD Extreme	70	#19
Hang Time	79	#11	Klingon Honour Guard	84	#31
Hard War	59	#29	Knights and Merchants	81	#32
Harpoon 97	90	#10	Krazy Ivan	57	#9
Heart of Darkness	89	#27	Lander	95	#37
Heaven's Dawn	25	#6	Lands Of Lore 2	92	#17
Heavy Gear	91	#20	Lands of Lore 3	60	#38
Heavy Gear II	93	#40	Last Bronx	70	#24
Hedz	69	#32	Legacy of Kain	65	#18
Helicops	79	#15	Legal Crime	77	#23
Hell Bender	54	#7	Lighthouse	88	#8
Heretic	50	#3	Links 99	86	#32
Heretic 2	91	#34	Links 2000	79	#44
Heroes of Might and Magic II	88	#10	Links LS	90	#6
Heroes of Might and Magic III	94	#35	Links LS98	91	#17
HOMM III: Armageddon's Blade	70	#45	Longbow 2	88	#21
Hexen	90	#3	Lords of Magic	74	#23
Hexen 2	91	#18	Lords of the Realms 2	84	#10
Hexen 2: Portal of Praevus	78	#27	Lords of the Realms 2: Siege	79	#16
Hexplode	75	#28	Luftwaffe Command	68	#35
Hidden and Dangerous	88	#41	Lunatics	61	#14
Hind	84	#9	M.A.X. 2	81	#30
Holy Casino	71	#10	M1 Tank Platoon	91	#25
Homeworld	95	#41	M1A2 Abrams	80	#13
House of the Dead	59	#28	M25 Racer	25	#45
Howzat	2	#22	Madden 98	81	#20
Hoyle Casino '98	73	#22	Madden NFL 97	84	#8
Hunter Hunted	70	#10	Madden NFL 99	88	#32
Hyperblade	89	#8	Madden NFL 2000	84	#44
I Have No Mouth and...	79	#3	Machines	90	#38
I-War	89	#21	Mage Slayer	64	#20
I-War: Defiance	72	#44	Magic the Gathering: Spec. Ed	69	#25
IF-22	65	#17	Magic: The Gathering-MicroProse	91	#12
Ignition	81	#18	MTG: Spells of Ancients	70	#21
Imperialism	81	#21	Magic: The Gathering-Acclaim	71	#12
Imperialism 2	72	#37	Man of War	71	#18
Imperium Galactica	80	#14	Man of War II	15	#40
In Pursuit of Greed	70	#5	Manx TT	44	#23
Incoming	67	#24	Mass Destruction	78	#17
Incubation	84	#19	Master of Dimension	71	#9
Independence Day	85	#13	Master Levels for Doom 2	30	#1
Indy Racing	64	#28	Master of Orion 2	92	#10
Indiana Jones			Mastermind	71	#26
& The Infernal Machine	69	#45	Maximum Roadrage	32	#6
Int. Rally Championship	79	#21	MDK	83	#12
International Cricket Captain	91	#28	Meat Puppets	71	#16
Interstate '76	93	#12	Mech Commander	86	#27

ONE YEAR AGO: HERETIC II

QUIZ: Raven used which game engine to develop Heretic II?

Mechwarrior 2: Mercenaries	85	#7	Netmech	60	#6
Mechwarrior 2: Titanium	86	#26	Netstorm	85	#20
Mechwarrior 3	91	#39	Newman Haas Racing	70	#33
Mega Race 2	69	#7	NHL 98	90	#19
Metal Storm	25	#10	NHL 99	73	#31
MIA	65	#34	NHRA Drag Racing	68	#32
MIB	78	#20	Nightlong	79	#31
Micro Machines v3	80	#29	Nightmare Creatures	79	#27
Microsoft Combat Flight Sim	89	#33	Nine	84	#9
Microsoft Golf 99	80	#36	Noir	61	#12
Midtown Madness	89	#40	Normality	78	#4
Mig Alley	92	#42	Norse by Norsewest	72	#12
Might & Magic VI	91	#26	North vs. South	67	#37
Might & Magic VII	70	#40	Novalogic F16 + MiG 29	90	#32
Mike Stewart's Bodyboarding	34	#40	Nuclear Strike	85	#20
Mimi and the Mites	78	#6	Obsidian	81	#15
Monaco Grand Prix	74	#32	Of Light and Darkness	60	#26
Monopoly: World Cup 98	45	#26	Offensive	35	#4
Monster Truck Madness	77	#7	Olympic Games 1996	44	#6
Monster Truck Madness 2	82	#26	Omikron: The Nomad Soul	93	#44
Monster Trucks	59	#19	Onside	35	#4
Montezuma's Return	42	#32	Operation Art of War 2	84	#42
Monty Python's Meaning of Life	57	#25	Orion Burger	76	#11
Moon Buggy 98	81	#18	Outcast	59	#40
Mortal Kombat 4	80	#30	Outlaws	78	#13
Moto Racer	94	#16	Outpost 2	68	#18
Moto Racer 2	86	#30	Outwars	85	#26
Motocross Madness	94	#30	Over The Reich	70	#12
Motorhead	83	#26	Overboard	79	#19
MS Flight Sim v6	83	#10	Pacific General	82	#17
MS Flight Sim 2000	84	#44	Pandemonium 2	20	#30
MS Football	36	#10	Panzer Commander	58	#27
MS Pinball Arcade	86	#34	Panzer General 2	82	#21
Mummy	65	#10	Paris French Open	72	#18
Muppet Treasure Island	62	#5	Pax Imperia	65	#21
Myth 2	91	#35	Perfect Assassin	80	#19
Myth: The Fallen Lords	93	#20	PGA Tour Pro	86	#17
NASCAR 2	76	#11	Phantasmagoria 2	81	#11
NASCAR 3	89	#44	Pharaoh	88	#45
Nascar Road Racing	28	#41	Pilgrim	46	#26
Nascar Truck	80	#38	Pinball Soccer	72	#33
Nations: Fighter Command	82	#44	Plane Crazy	70	#26
NBA Action 98	85	#23	POD	74	#11
NBA JAM	39	#14	Populous: The Beginning	86	#32
NBA Live 98	88	#20	Postal	38	#18
NBA Live 99	86	#31	Power Chess	83	#10
NBA Live 2000	90	#45	Power F1	69	#11
NCAA Final Four '97	74	#12	Powerboat Racing	70	#25
Necrodome	70	#10	Powerslide	93	#32
Need For Speed 2	90	#13	Premier Manager 97	88	#16
Need for Speed 2 SE	80	#21	Prince of Persia 3D	65	#43
Need for Speed 3	79	#28	Privateer 2: The Darkening	89	#8
Need for Speed: High Stakes	89	#41	Pro18 World Tour Golf	69	#38
Need for Speed SE	56	#5	Pro Pilot	62	#23

SCORE LIST

GAME

SCORE

ISSUE

Puma World Football 98

33

#20

Quake

92

#6

Quake: Armagon

85

#12

Quake: Eternity

72

#12

Quake 2

94

#21

Q2: The Reckoning

82

#27

Q2 Mission Pack: Ground Zero

87

#30

Quake III: Arena

93

#45

Queen: The Eye

60

#25

Quest for Glory V

90

#34

Radix

68

#7

Railroad Tycoon 2

91

#33

Rainbow 6

91

#30

Rainbow Six: Eagle Watch

86

#36

Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear

92

#44

Rally Challenge

84

#9

Rally Championship

81

#7

Rally Championship 2000

88

#45

Rama

86

#10

Rayman

92

#3

Rayman 2

89

#45

Re-Volt

82

#41

Reah

78

#32

Realms of the Haunting

91

#11

Red Baron 2

92

#23

Red Baron 3D

87

#34

Redguard

78

#35

Redjack

70

#31

Redline

83

#37

Redline Racer

78

#24

Redneck Deer Hunting

16

#30

Redneck Rampage

77

#14

Redneck Rampage Rides Again

48

#26

Redneck Rampage: Route '66

64

#22

Requiem - Avenging Angel

90

#38

Resident Evil

74

#19

Resident Evil 2

88

#37

Return Fire

69

#4

Return Fire 2

72

#32

Return of Arcade

70

#5

Return to Krondor

79

#34

Revenant

82

#45

Ripper

70

#1

Risk

84

#15

Riven

90

#19

Riverworld

65

#31

Road Rash

80

#8

Rocket Jockey

68

#15

Rogue Squadron

82

#33

Roland Garros

85

#32

Rollcage

90

#38

Rollercoaster Tycoon

93

#36

R'coaster Tyc: Added Attractions

81

#45

Ruthless.com

82

#35

S.C.A.R.S.

64

#31

Sabre Ace

82

#18

Safe Cracker

49

#24

Saga: Rage of the Vikings

42

#40

Sand Warrior

68

#16

Scarab

81

#13

Screamer 2

81

#8

Sega Rally

72

#11

Sega Rally 2

68

#41

Sega Touring Car Champ.

29

#23

Semper Fi

50

#24

Sentient

68

#14

Sentinel Returns

84

#27

Settlers 2

87

#3

Settlers 2 Mission Disk

67

#12

Settlers 3

88

#33

Seven Kingdoms

87

#21

Seven Kingdoms 2

86

#44

Shadow Company

74

#44

Shadow Man

61

#41

Shadow Master

70

#24

Shadow Warrior

80

#18

Shadows of the Empire

80

#18

Shadows Over Riva

84

#15

Shane Warne Cricket

86

#37

Shanghai Dynasty

93

#22

Shattered Steel

86

#8

Shellshock

40

#6

Sherlock Holmes

90

#9

Shivers 2

52

#14

Shogo: MAD

84

#32

Shrak Quake

40

#16

Sid Meier's Gettysburg

92

#20

Silent Hunter

74

#2

Silent Thunder

72

#2

Silver

84

#36

Sim City 3000

90

#35

Sim Copter

71

#10

Sim Safari

60

#25

Sin

84

#32

Sin - Wages of Sin

73

#38

Skydive!

12

#42

SlamTilt

68

#12

Snow Wave Avalanche

60

#33

SODA Offroad Racing

75

#22

Solar Crusade

26

#18

Soldier Boyz

12

#29

Soldiers at War

80

#27

Sonic and Knuckles

76

#13

Soul Reaver: Legacy Of Kain

81

#43

Space Bunnies Must Die

74

#31

Space Hulk

74

#5

Spearhead

89

#30

Spec Ops: Ranger Assault

84

#28

Speed Rally

89

#21

Speedboat Attack

30

#19

Speedbusters

91

#36

Spiderman: The Sinister Six

49

#11

Sports Car GT

90

#40

Spycraft: The Great Game

90

#1

Star Command

80

#14

Star Control 3

77

#8

Star Rangers

57

#2

Star Trek Academy

92

#17

Star Trek Borg

71

#13

Star Trek: BOTF

90

#39

Star Trek Generations

83

#13

Star Trek Pinball

76

#25

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

64

#2

Star Trek: Starfleet Command

87

#43

Star Wars: Rebellion

88

#24

Starball

45

#2

Starcraft

92

#25

Starcraft Insurrection

79

#29

Starcraft: Brood Wars

87

#35

Starcraft: Retribution

71

#34

Stars!

89

#11

Starship Titanic

71

#24

Starsiege

90

#37

Starsiege Tribes

88

#35

Steel Panthers

84

#21

Steel Panthers add-on disk

75

#6

Stratosphere

82

#28

Street Fighter Alpha 2

69

#27

Streets of Sim City

30

#21

Strife

86

#6

SU-27 Flanker Mission Disk

88

#18

SU-27 Flanker 2.0

83

#44

Sub Culture

82

#19

Super EF2000 Tactcom

92

#11

Super Stardust

89

#6

Superbike World Champ.

91

#34

Surface Tension

15

#9

Swat 2

75

#29

SWIV

82

#9

Syndicate Wars

91

#9

System Shock 2

98

#42

Take No Prisoners

81

#19

Tanarus

85

#22

Team Apache

83

#28

Tempest 2000

90

#1

Terminator: Future Shock

90

#1

Terminator: Skynet

94

#12

Terracide

65

#17

Terranova

91

#2

Test Drive Off Road

70

#13

Tex Murphy: Overseer

89

#24

TM: The Pandora Directive

93

#6

The Creed

86

#29

The Feeble Files

73

#19

The Fifth Element

80

#31

The Golf Pro

87

#24

The Last Express

88

#13

The Martian Chronicles

48

#9

The Neverhood

93

#9

The Phantom Menace

76

#39

The Reap

76

#23

The Ring

54

#33

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80

#19

The Wheel of Time

84

#45

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76

#27

Theme Hospital

90

#12

Thief: Dark Project

95

#33

Thief Gold

96

#45

Theme Park World

80

#45

Thrust, Twist & Turn

30

#39

Thunder Brigade

79

#35

Tiger Woods 99

79

#31

Tigershark

74

#15

Time Commando

93

#5

Time Lapse

80

#9

Titanic

74

#10

TOCA Touring Cars

94

#20

TOCA 2

91

#37

Tom Clancy SSN

75

#15

Tomb Raider

94

#9

Tomb Raider 2

86

#19

Tomb Raider 3

88

#33

Tomb Raider: Last Revelation

89

#43

Tomb Raider: Unfinished Bus.

68

#26

Top Gun: Fire At Will

60

#1

Top Gun: Hornet's Nest

65

#34

Torin's Passage

50

#1

Total Air War

92

#31

Total Annihilation

98

#18

TA: Commander

85

#34

TA: Core Contingency

90

#26

Total Annihilation: Kingdoms

84

#40

Total Mayhem

64

#3

Traitor's Gate

78

#44

Trespasser

60

#33

Triple Play 97

63

#5

Triple Play 98

82

#16

Triple Play 99

87

#26

Trophy Bass

72

#28

Trophy Bass 2

40

#25

Turok 2

54

#33

Turok Dinosaur Hunter

89

#20

Twinsen's Odyssey

84

#15

Twisted Metal 2

84

#22

Tyrian

54

#7

UEFA 98/99

71

#38

U.F.O.

73

#29

Ubik

81

#24

Ultima IX: Ascension

70

#45

Ultimate Race Pro

68

#23

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72

#12

Ultra Violent Worlds

30

#29

Unreal

98

#26

Unreal: Return to Na Pali

72

#41

Unreal Tournament

94

#45

Uprising

89

#22

Uprising 2

58

#36

Urban Assault

81

#29

USCF Chess

71

#23

V2000

45

#33

Vangers

53

#29

Vegas Games

60

#14

Versailles

81

#11

Viper Racing

80

#34

Virtua Cop

82

#10

Virtua Cop 2

78

#21

Virtual Deep Sea Fishing

63

#38

Virtual Pool 2

93

#19

Virtual Snooker

80

#2

Voodoo Kid

79

#18

Voyeur 2

20

#5

VR Sports Baseball 97

91

#2

W. Gretzky & NHLPA Allstars

20

#

Wages of War

65

#11

War College Simulator 3

57

#6

War Games

68

#29

War Gods

70

#18

War of the Worlds

70

#34

Warbirds 2

81

#37

Warbreeds

54

#26

Warcraft 2: 70 Levels

63

#12

Warcraft 2: Dark Portal

60

#3

Wargasm

80

#32

Warhammer 40K

88

#22

Warhammer: Dark Omen

88

#25

Warlords 3

89

#16

Warlords 3: Darklords

89

#29

Warwind 2

54

#22

Warzone 2100

88

#38

Water World

56

#19

WCW Nitro

52

#35

Wetrix

40

#31

Wing Commander Kilrathi

82

#9

Wing Commander Prophecy

90

#22

Wipeout 2097

75

#14

Witchaven 2

59

#4

Wizardry

80

#9

Wizardry Gold

52

#4

Wolfenstein 3D

100

#25

Wooden Ships and Iron Men

71

#13

World Cup 98

84

#27

World League Basketball

58

#26

World League Soccer 98

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#26

World Rally Fever

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#4

Worms 2

90

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#5

Wreckin' Crew

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#29

Wrestlemania

80

#5

WWII Fighters

92

#33

X-Wing Alliance

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#37

X-Wing vs. TIE

93

#13

X Wing vs. TIE: Balance Power

83

#22

X-Wing vs. Predator

XCII

DD

X-Car

61

#20

X-COM: Apocalypse

93

#15

X-COM: Interceptor

77

#27

Xenocracy

68

#28

XS

71

#9

Yoda Stories

74

#12

You Don't Know Jack XL

94

#2

You Don't Know Jack: Movies

88

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Z

72

#6

Zombie Wars

69

#13

Zork Grand Inquisitor

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#20

Zork Nemesis

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QUIZ ANSWERS

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Year of the RPG

I had expected to be talking about Messiah here this month, but as you know its release date has slipped once more. Sadly, you'll now have to wait 'til next month to read my hilarious nappy jokes.

I had also thought I'd make mention of Daikatana, but as you know its release... No, actually, I'm kidding about that, I'll mention it this time next year. Ha.

With those two opportunities postponed, I think I might instead write a little piece to commemorate the Year of the Roleplaying Game. So, when was the Year of the RPG? No, all you smart-arses up the back, it wasn't 1986. Try 1999. And here's why:

• Baldur's Gate was the best selling PC game in Australia. Bioware's exemplary recreation of the Forgotten Realms proved a mammoth hit for Interplay, encouraging both them and other developers to travel once again to the lands of quests, experience points and orcs. Now, perhaps we can graduate to a rules system a touch more interesting than AD&D.

• System Shock 2 scooped our Best of 1999 awards - and is doing rather well in the GOTY voting thus far, I might add. Purists will scoff, but Irrational's cyber-nightmare is as much an RPG as it is an action game. Better yet, unlike the original, people actually bought the sequel. What's the bet there'll be several Shock clones toward the end of this year?

Will the trend continue throughout 2000? Well, the year has begun on a promising note. Planescape: Torment is the first great game of the year, expanding upon the basic mechanics of Baldur's Gate by adding much deeper character interaction and a more sophisticated narrative. Sure, it's possibly too weird and obscure to repeat BG's retail success, but we've seen how the market has changed over the past twelve months. Maybe now is the time for Torment.

David Wildgoose,
Staff Writer



ISSUE 46 REVIEWS

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THE PC POWERPLAY SCORING SYSTEM

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 95%+ | PLATINUM The Best. Virtually faultless, reserved for games which cause loss of sleep from thinking of nothing else. |
| 90-94% | GOLD A classic. Either an unquestionable example of superiority within its genre, or a ground breaking game that'll be setting trends. |
| 80-90% | A strong, eminently playable game. Hard to fault and likely to still be on the hard drive in 6 month's time. |
| 60-80% | Competent and generally enjoyable. Flaws or mediocrity hold these games back from higher ratings. |
| 40-60% | Average and ordinary. Not bad, not good. Ideal gift. |
| 0-40% | Bad, really bad. Boring, shamelessly unoriginal, cheap and horrible. |

Imperium Galactica 2

●Genre: Galactic Domination ●Players: 1-8 ●Developer: Digital Reality ●Publisher: GT Interactive ●Distributor: GT Interactive ●Price: \$79.95 ●Rating: TBA ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P233, 32MB RAM, 3D Videocard (D3D) ●Want: PIII 350, 128MB RAM, 16MB 3D Videocard, 3D Soundcard (A3D) ●URL: www.imperiumgalactica2.com

Despite the promise shown by the first in the series, nothing could have prepared us for the exceptional quality of this spacebound strategy sequel.



"Mayday - things are getting blurry!"

Although the original Imperium Galactica was an enjoyable game, its flaws were significant enough to consign it to the 'could have been great if...' category. While innately similar to Masters of Orion 2, Imperium Galactica 2 is best described as a game combining selected elements of classic titles like Alpha Centauri, Homeworld and Sim City. And, despite its seeming lack of pedigree, IG2 distinguishes itself as one of the most impressive titles to grace the PC in recent times.

other empires. In stark contrast, the Kra 'Hen are a ruthless and savage warrior race motivated solely by an overwhelming desire to eradicate and conquer all other life forms. Their superior military capabilities make them a force to be reckoned with.

Although the central focus of each of the three campaigns remains the same, all of the peripheral incidents and side quests are randomised, adding greatly to IG2's longterm value. In addition to the campaigns, there are several pre-

generated scenarios that require the player to achieve specific goals like the annihilation of a particular species, or the acquisition of a strategically important (and heavily defended) planet. These scenarios range in difficulty from easy to impossible, and take several hours to complete. Digital Reality is also creating additional scenarios for download from the official IG2 web site. IG2's multiplayer component supports up to eight players, and a built-in IRC utility, with

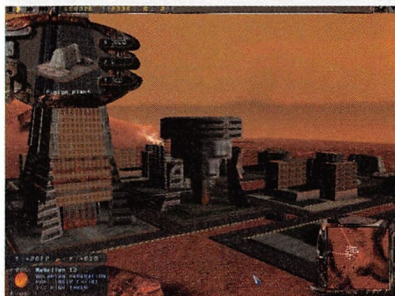
TIPS

- Set taxes on newly-colonised planets to the lowest level possible. This will drastically increase morale and encourage population and economic growth. Feel free to increase taxation rates later, but try to construct a Stadium or Entertainment Centre at the same time to counter the inevitable drop in colonist morale.
- Ensure that all planets under your control are outfitted with ground-based defence structures. Even the least advanced structures can decimate large groups of tanks, and thwart attacks from orbit with relative ease.
- In the intermediate stages of the game, try and train at least half your spies up to level 20. It's expensive in the short term, but will pay dividends when civil unrest caused by your spies enables you to capture heavily-populated planets with well-established economies and advanced unit production capabilities.

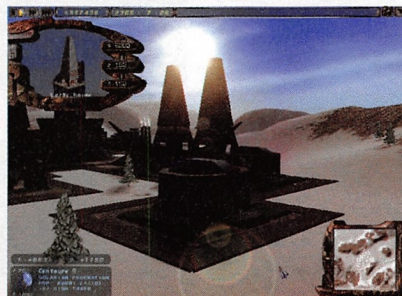
Sinister Intentions

The campaign portion of the game allows the player to adopt the role of Emperor of one of three empires: the Solarians, the Shinari and the Kra 'Hen. Each empire differs significantly in its objectives, strengths and weaknesses. The Solarians, IG2's human species, are masters of research. They endeavour to locate four mythical crystals said to hold the secret to immortality, and aspire to use this knowledge to bring all other empires under their rule. The Shinari, an economically motivated race severely lacking in military strength, are expert in the intricacies of intelligence and diplomacy. Rather than seeking to rule the galaxy, the devious Shinari are content to profit from conflicts between





The display home complex of the future.



Gratuitous lens flare shot.



Obviously, grey is hip in the future.

an instant link to various multiplayer servers, makes rapidly finding potential adversaries simple. Those without the luxury of a T1 internet connection need not worry, however, as the game also supports skirmish matches against AI opponents.

"SPIES TASKED WITH SABOTAGING SPECIFIC MILITARY BUILDINGS..."

Radical Realtime

The game's combat system falls into the middle ground between turnbased and realtime, the former for unit attacks and the latter for unit movement. All combat units and structures are represented by three-dimensional models whose details surpass even those of Homeworld. Strategy purists dismayed by the "radical" shift to a quasi realtime

system will be heartened to learn that the action can be slowed down or paused at any time, or the outcome of battles can be automatically decided by the AI.

Though essential to success in the long run, combat isn't the only focus

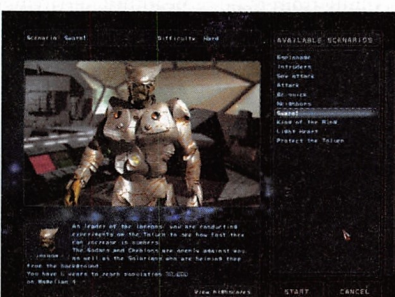
of IG2. Colonised planets must be carefully micromanaged to ensure that the morale of citizens remains high, and that economic output remains equally high. The process isn't as exacting as in dedicated games like Sim City, but this is definitely a positive factor, as player workload increases dramatically as additional planets are colonised.

Covert Operations

Spies are a particularly useful resource in the intermediate stages of the game when they can serve as gatherers of information on other empires. Dismantling an empire's power base from the inside is even more effective than attacking with military units, and has several distinct advantages. Spies tasked with sabotaging specific military buildings can render planets defenceless, leaving their valuable infrastructure intact. Players who prefer to engage in wars of attrition can order spies to sabotage buildings of economic importance, siphon funds directly into their own accounts, or steal blueprints to crucial technologies. Using spies in these ways ►



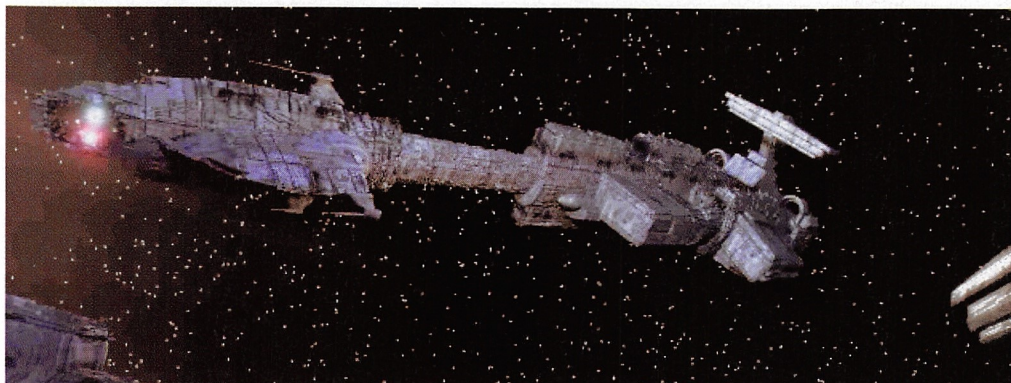
"Honey, I'll be home at 8pm!"



"And for first ten callers, this entire set of..."

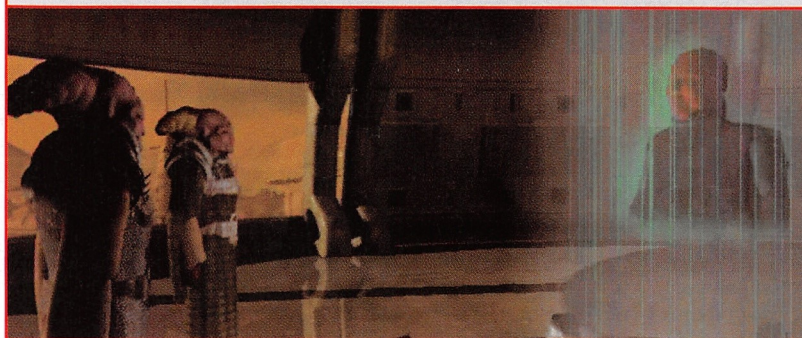
"DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY!"

Like espionage, diplomacy plays an important role in the game. Military alliances with other empires can be established, and trade agreements can be entered into. Information on other empires can be exchanged with interested parties, and technologies normally unavailable through research or trade can be acquired through judicious bargaining. Players in command of powerful empires can also use strongarm tactics to acquire anything from large sums of money or advanced technologies to entire planets. However, few empires take kindly to such actions and players may later find themselves under attack by multiple empires united against a common enemy!



VODKA MARTINIS AND POLITICAL INTRIGUE

Spying, an oft-overlooked feature in games like *Alpha Centauri*, plays a central role in the player's quest for dominion over rival empires. Upon construction of Spy Centres, freelance spies report to offer their services. The player can then hire them on a one-off or permanent basis, or decline their offers completely. All spies are rated using a system similar to those used in RPGs. Experience points are granted for the successful completion of missions, with spies "levelling up" when they accumulate enough experience points. Skill points are awarded when level-ups occur, and these can be used to increase attributes like loyalty, as well as combat and infiltration skills. The level-up process can be speeded up through training, though this is costly and not economically viable in the early stages of the game.



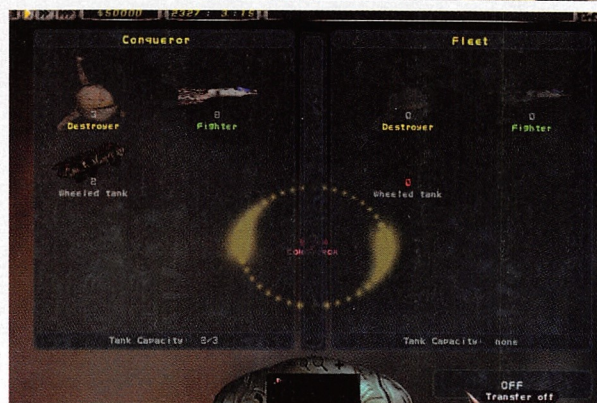
is also an excellent way of sidestepping the diplomatic and economic implications of out-and-out war.

During advanced stages of the campaign, players will often find themselves in command of veritable armies of spies. With their additional expertise enabling them to undertake complicated and risky missions with relatively high success rates, spies that reach the upper experience echelons can easily become the most powerful units in a player's arsenal. Inciting revolts and assassinating leaders on key planets can result in those planets seceding from their parent empires, declaring independence, or even joining the player's own empire. Within a reasonable time frame, entire empires

can be assimilated in this manner, leaving their space-based units destitute and destined to wander the galaxy as nomads or pirates. Of course, other empires continually attempt to achieve the same results, and assigning several spies to counter-intelligence and spy hunting duties is often essential. Captured enemy spies can be released with a warning, made to become double agents or summarily executed! The latter option is particularly satisfying, and serves as a simple (but extremely effective) deterrent to future incursions.

Intuitive Intelligence

In spite of its intimidating complexities, *IG2* is relatively easy to get into. An extremely comprehensive five-part tutorial covers everything from trade to combat, enabling players to rapidly familiarise themselves with the game's mechanics. An equally comprehensive, intelligent, online help system provides additional information and further



Seems like a fair swap to me.



"No, no, no! These colours just won't do. Do you have one in pink?"

streamlines the learning process. The interface is also quite intuitive, with a simplistic and non-intrusive design that gives the player absolute control over every aspect of the game.

In developing *Imperium Galactica 2*, Digital Reality cannot be commended highly enough. Expending minimal effort and capital, and creating what amounted to a graphical update to the original game would have been an easy course of action to take. Instead, they took the difficult road, and produced one of the most breathtakingly beautiful, terrifyingly addictive and downright enjoyable strategy titles in existence. *Imperium Galactica 2* is an absolutely essential purchase for strategy newcomers and veterans alike.

Brett Robinson



Costumes on par with those in *Doctor Who*.

PCPP

FOR: Incredible gameplay depth and longterm value. Some of the most stunning FMV of all time.

AGAINST: Micromanagement of 40+ planets may be too much of a workload for strategy novices.

PLUS

www.astrobiology.com/terraforming.html
Numerous essays, information compilations and artistic impressions regarding possible methods of terraforming barren planets like Mars, in an effort to make them habitable. VERY interesting reading!



92

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Harvey Norman

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HN21439

SWAT 3: Close Quarters Combat

●Genre: Tactical First Person Simulation ●Players: 1 ●Developer: Sierra Studios ●Publisher: Sierra Studios ●Distributor: Dataflow ●Price: \$89.95 ●Rating: MA15+ ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P233, 32MB RAM, 400MB HD ●Want: PIII350, 128MB RAM, 700MB HD, 12MB 3D Video Card ●URL: www.sierrastudios.com/swat3/

The tactical squad-based shooter genre spawns another. Why send one man when four will do?



Flatlining is sadly permanent.



TIPS

- Train exhaustively in the Shooting House to get your marksmanship and movement skills up to scratch, and get in some extra practice before undertaking very gruelling missions.
- Religiously use the lean keys to peek around corners or, better yet, use the Opti-Wand. It's much safer in the long run.

The closing months of 1999 saw a significant swelling in the ranks of a genre forged by the likes of Spec Ops and Rainbow Six. Sadly, many of the most eagerly awaited titles failed to live up to the lofty expectations induced by the perpetual hype machine. Delta Force 2 has brought with it few genuine improvements and Spec Ops 2 has proven markedly inferior to every other tactical title in existence - including its predecessor. Rogue Spear, sequel to the award-winning Rainbow Six, reigned supreme as the best of a decidedly mediocre bunch, once again reinforcing the notion that Red Storm Entertainment consistently develop high grade titles. However, even Rogue Spear seemed more like an expansion pack than a completely new game. For devotees still waiting for a game that will change the face of the tactical

genre, SWAT 3 may be just what the field surgeon ordered.

The game is set in Los Angeles during Global Peace Week, 2005. SWAT is charged with maintaining order within LA for the duration. Of primary concern is the safety of the foreign dignitaries staying in LA, who are there to sign the UN Nuclear Abolition Treaty. A successful signing of the treaty will ensure worldwide cooperation, with global peace ensuing. A scenario that is perhaps a tad optimistic, but as good an incentive for success as any other.

Early missions are relatively straightforward affairs, involving tasks like the arrest and interrogation of a crazed sniper taking pot shots at passing motorists from his attic window. Another early mission requires the execution of a high-risk arrest warrant. These serve as an excellent

way for players to familiarise themselves with the game's interface, and also prepare them for the extremely challenging hostage rescue, VIP escort and anti-terrorist operations ahead.

On the fly

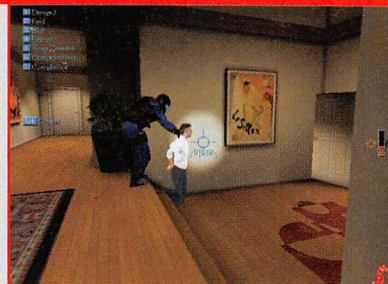
SWAT 3 differs greatly from Rogue Spear in that there is very little pre-mission planning. The intelligent reticle interface allows all orders to be issued mid-mission, cutting the pre-mission workload down to the selection of squad members and the outfitting of those members with weapons and tactical aids.

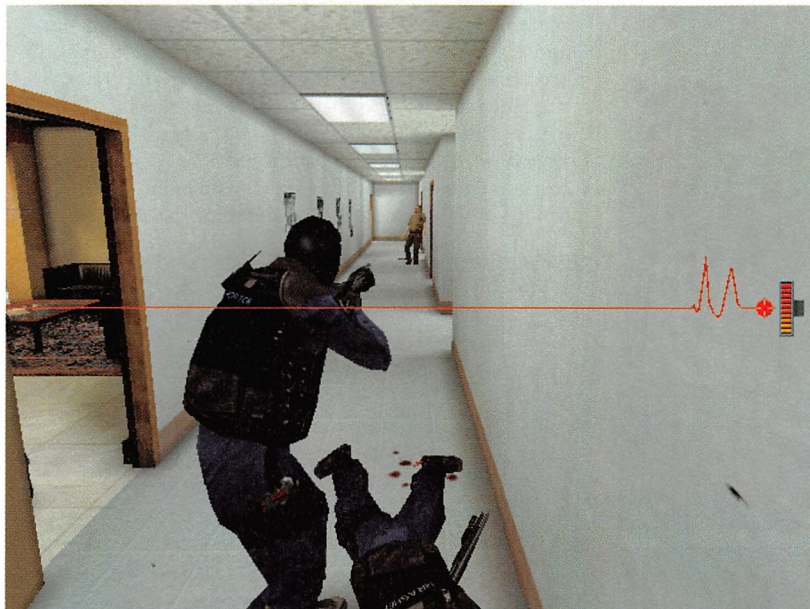
With the exception of the Helmet and Opti-Wand, all equipment available in the game is employed by the real LAPD SWAT. As a result, firearm diversity is somewhat limited in comparison to competing titles. However, honing of marksmanship

USING YOUR HEAD

The Tactical Helmet forms an integral part of what is unquestionably the most intuitive and comprehensive interface in existence. Its HUD displays an impressive array of information, from squad member health status to noxious gas warnings. The intelligent reticle changes dynamically in response to objects that it is pointed at. Pointing it at a door allows players to simply open it, or issue a large assortment of orders to squad members. These can

range from 'Breach, Bang and Clear' to 'Provide Cover'. When the reticle is centred on suspects, players can issue surrender orders, radio in reports to HQ, or simply shoot them. This simple innovation grants players an unprecedented degree of freedom, contributing greatly to suspension of disbelief and streamlining the game mechanics to the point where performing complicated tasks and issuing squad orders becomes second nature.



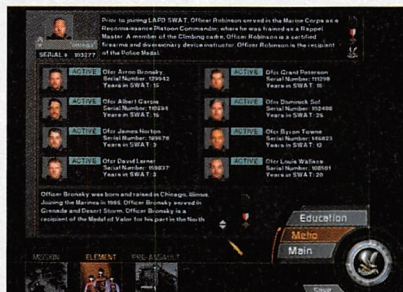


FATAL PHYSICS

SWAT 3's physics engine accurately models bullet penetration, allowing players additional freedom in dealing with hostiles. Realistic bullet penetration is, however, a double-edged sword. Suspects with itchy trigger fingers will often shoot through doors and walls at perceived threats. Situational awareness is of paramount importance, and players must constantly be mindful of the compositions of environmental objects. While solid marble columns may provide more than adequate cover from sustained fire, wooden lecterns and antique settees offer significantly reduced protection. The importance of situational awareness is exponentially increased when squad members are firing on suspects. The fundamental rule for SWAT members when discharging their weapons is to be aware of the composition of objects that their bullets may hit. For most, this lesson will be learned the hard way. In one particularly chilling in-game incident, a single FMJ bullet, fired through the head of a suspect, also passed through two walls and a wooden door before lodging itself in the torso of a hostage, killing her instantly. Luckily, she saw the funny side.



Outfit your squad with guns...



...after you've chosen from this motley bunch.

skills is what it's all about, and players will find themselves intimately familiar with their weapon of choice by the conclusion of Global Peace Week. Tactical aids like Flashbangs and CS Gas canisters are an essential part of the SWAT arsenal, as are handcuffs, OmniGlow Light Sticks and C2 Door

Exceptional AI

An aspect that makes or breaks tactical games of all types is AI. SWAT 3's AI is the most realistic ever. While not absolutely perfect, it is literally light years ahead of much of the competition, edging out stiff opposition from Half Life's Marines and many of System

"...USING A SAVVY COMBINATION OF INTIMIDATION AND CS GAS."

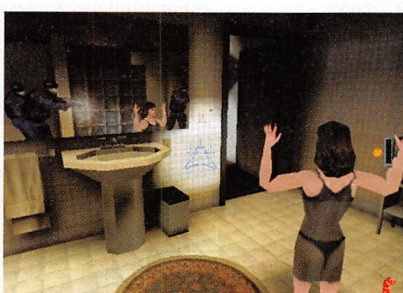
Breaching Charges. The Opti-Wand, a miniature camera mounted on the end of a 2-foot-long flexible rod, allows players to peek around corners by beaming the camera image directly into the Helmet HUD. On extremely high-risk operations, it becomes one of the most important pieces of equipment carried by the squad.

Shock 2's creatures, while walking all over Rogue Spear's efforts.

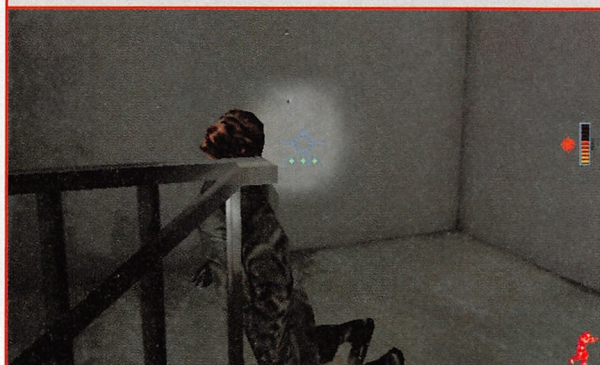
Within SWAT 3, stress is the major determinant of NPC actions, and suspect reactions to stress-causing stimuli are highly variable. The level of stress experienced by NPCs is also directly related to the intensity of the stimuli. Suspects who see their



Well, it's one way to meet chicks.



G-strings lower the polygon count.



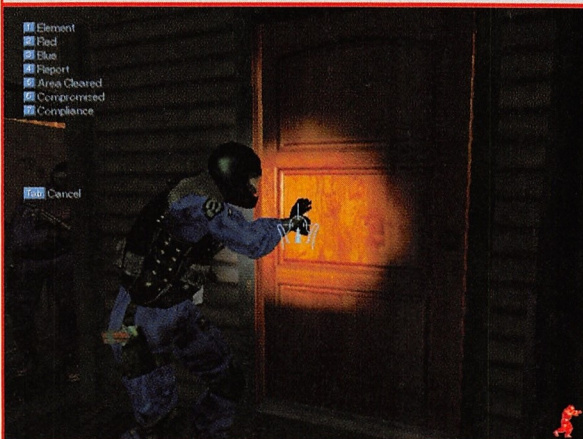
Remember to always take the stairs one at a time. Or else.



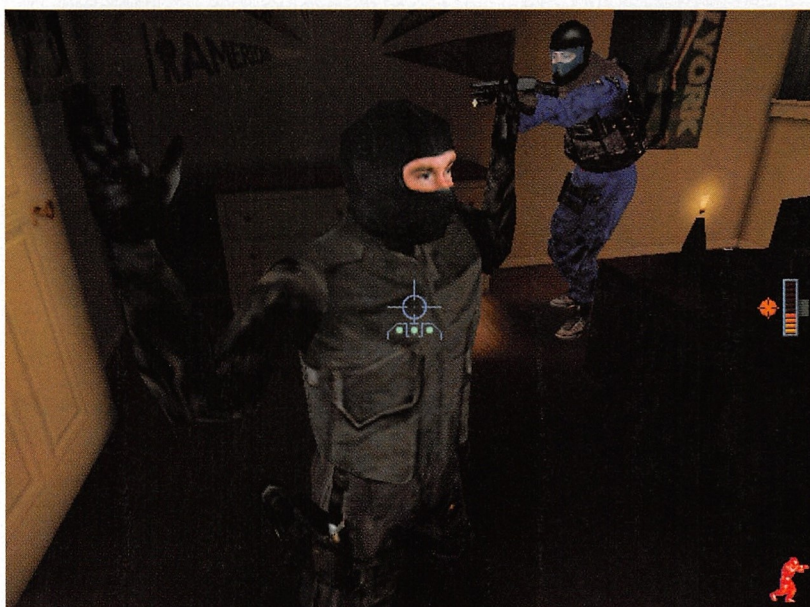


SHREWD SUSPECTS

On higher difficulty levels, hostile suspects are acutely aware of their surroundings, rarely venturing out into areas where they'd be vulnerable to attack. Some even conceal themselves within cupboards and crates, laughing maniacally as they cut down any squad members lacking the foresight to anticipate such ambushes. Suspects also back each other up, providing cover when movement is essential, and luring overly confident players toward makeshift fortifications.



Brett puts a suspicious doorknob under interrogation.



This is what you get for sneaking extra guests into your hotel room.



comrades slain may immediately drop to their knees and surrender when confronted by the superior firepower and close proximity of a SWAT squad. But when faced with an entrenched SWAT squad ordering them to surrender from a distance, the suspects may adopt a siege mentality and move to a more advantageous position. And even when facing insurmountable odds, suspects may elect to go down in a blaze of glory, attempting to take down as many SWAT officers as possible. Through its superior AI and differing

subject matter, SWAT 3 introduces a gameplay element not offered by other tactical titles: that of player discretion. While some mission objectives are obviously hard-wired, the manner in which players carry out these missions is extremely flexible. In games like Rogue Spear, there is a clear distinction between hostiles and innocents. As a result, the players' only course of action is the systematic execution of Tangos. In SWAT 3, players can ruthlessly kill every suspect, shoot only those who pose a threat, or even subdue and arrest every possible suspect using a savvy combination of intimidation, negotiation and CS gas. This high degree of flexibility elevates SWAT 3 high above the competition in both the realism and enjoyment stakes.



His crime: tucking his tie into his pants.

No multiplayer

In spite of its phenomenally immersive gameplay and unprecedented realism, SWAT 3 is not without its quirks. Squad AI is occasionally less than perfect, and the game has one glaring omission - a lack of multiplayer support. The longterm value of SWAT 3 is dramatically increased by the fact that the locations of all suspects, hostages and civilians are randomised in each and every mission, but multiplayer SWAT 3 would have been the icing on the cake. Fortunately, numerous improvements and enhancements, including multiplayer, will be included in an add-on CD due for release in the coming months. Bring it on!

Brett Robinson

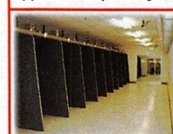
PCPP

FOR: Unprecedented graphical splendour, fantastic audio and almost flawless AI.

AGAINST: No multiplayer! Sob.

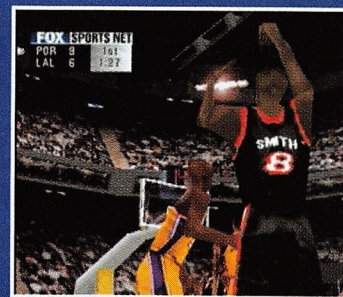
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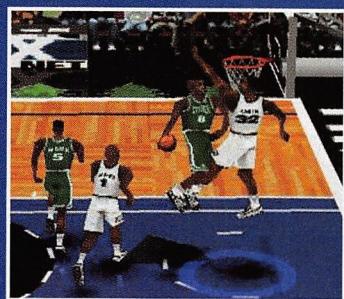
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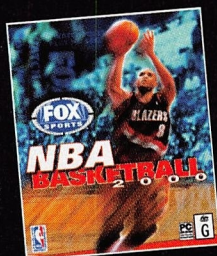
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PEIT 992865

Planescape: Torment

●Genre: RPG/Moral Dilemma ●Players: 1 ●Developer: Black Isle ●Publisher: Interplay ●Distributor: Interplay ●Price: \$89.95 ●Rating: MA ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P200 MMX, 32MB RAM, 650MB HDD, 8xCD, 4MB Videocard ●Want: PII 266 MMX, 64MB RAM, 800MB HDD, 8MB Videocard ●URL: <http://www.planescape-torment.com/>

The current masters of the roleplaying epic, Black Isle Studios, have surpassed even themselves with this chillingly dark mystery.

TIPS

• Be careful when assigning stats at the beginning of the game. Yes, you may start as a fighter, but you may wish to change during the game. Also, intelligence has a strong bearing on some conversations. On the other hand, sometimes being a big tough bastard is handy. Use the extra stat point you gain at level ups wisely.

• Be always aware that all you say, all you think and all you do has an effect on who you are and how you react to the planes. Be sure that you want the universe to see you as murderous scum, for example, and see how the Forces of Light react to you. Conversely, do you want the hordes of the various Hells to see you as an angelic force of love? This pattern runs true for every conversation you have. Be warned.



Action aplenty during the 28th night at a local tavern.



The Nameless One lies dead on a slab, tormented by nothing more tangible than visions and memories, locked in his own corpse and unable to die. Wheeled into a gigantic mortuary, resurrected by unknown forces, the only hope is to rise from the slab and ask that floating skull making Zombie Necrophilia jokes what is happening. Soon it is obvious that you have left a whole series of clues for yourself, including extensive and painful tattoos all over your body and a legacy of companions in some way touched by your strange, deathless life. The only thing to do is to set out on a quest that will lead you from the extradimensional Freeport of Sigil to the depths of many Hells, all to regain more than simply memories. You must find your soul, your redemption, and your personality and somehow, somehow, find an end to the

torment you have spread and suffer. And ultimately, you must learn to transcend all of the pain and let yourself die.

Good, Evil, and in-between

Torment takes place in the TSR pen and paper RPG world of Planescape. Set around Sigil, it is a city that borders on all the planes and dimensions, yet belongs to none of them. It is a

treacherous place, where demons walk with angels and humans do deals with the powers of neutrality, good and evil alike, and beings far stranger than any of these mix openly in the streets. Planescape was created to allow the old "Manual of the Planes" setting to be reused, but with an extremely mature philosophy where ethics and behaviour control the universe and belief and faith



"And beware objects emitting blue fire."

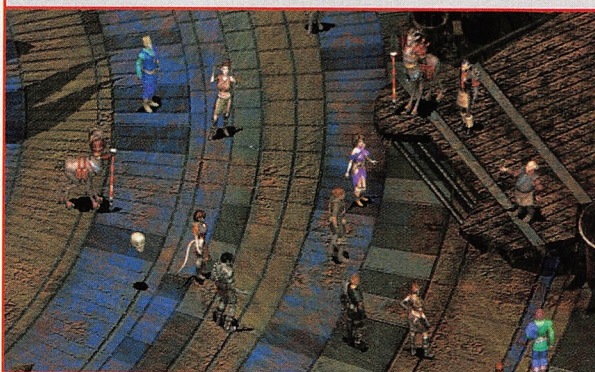


Day of the Triffids.



ALL TALK AND NO ACTION

Continuing conversations are a selling point of Torment. Filled with many side quests, personal interaction is the key to power. Performing services is a surer way to gain XP than chopping up everything in town. Again, keeping with the outre thematic structure, the subquests range from the simple "rescue the princess" through to the more outright weird. Burying a city's name or helping a golem learn that thievery is bad through to exposing false preachers is the order of the day. Subtly woven, the lessons learnt create a much broader tapestry than the main plot.



The plot is central, much like this piazza.



are more powerful than any spell or sword. Responsible for a surge of interest in the waning AD&D, and written with an attention to roleplaying (in the literal sense) not seen before, Planescape has proved to be a respected setting. In Torment, there is nothing but respect, attention to detail and a totally faithful conversion. Indeed, in some ways, the game provides a more visceral ambience than does the pen and paper game.

The world of Planescape, at once atmospheric and strange, is one of the areas where Torment first really grabs attention. Ignore any comparison to Baldur's Gate, Ultima, anything. Torment is fantasy like you've not played before. The physical environment is one of weird buildings, spiked and menacing, fluted minarets and foreboding gates. And that's before you

even get out to the planes. There you will find mountains of screaming skulls, lakes of fire and city-sized skeletons.

Rich interaction

Keeping with the non-traditional aspect, Torment makes its priority a

"FILLED WITH OBSCENE MONSTERS, BEAUTIFUL WOMEN AND GRIM MEN..."

very different one than your average game. It's not at heart an action game, it's about reliving the life of the Nameless. And it's about solving a mystery that is at once quite tragic and very, very personal. In a rare moment for PC games, the story behind the machine code is actually moving. The histories of the characters are all exceptionally well-developed, each with

a personality that is succinct and discrete. Quite often clues to the overall plot can be found in discussions with your teammates. Written in florid style, often you will talk to Morte, the skull, simply because he is funny. Fall-From-Grace is wise and Annah the Fiendling

is scathing to the point making the player wince, and Ignus is... disturbing.

Strange characters are symptomatic of gameplay that is very different from any RPG you have yet encountered. Death is easily overcome both by the Nameless One and his companions, thus removing an element of danger from the overall gameplay and forcing a more stylistic game. Starting out as a



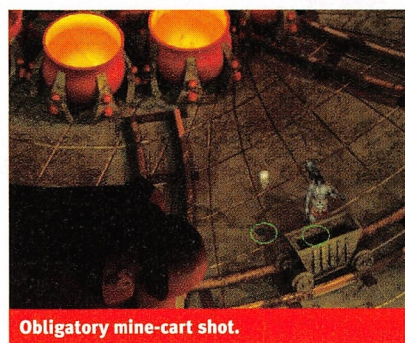
A case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Neutral, you will change alignments based on your actions; if you are trying for a good or evil, chaos or law character, close attention must be paid to attitude. Remember, attitude shapes reality on the planes and certainly affects reactions from the NPCs

Start your engines

Like Baldur's Gate, Planescape: Torment is a 2D isometric game. It uses Bioware's Infinity engine, which is the same graphics engine used in Baldur's Gate, although the view offered here is zoomed in a little. The game screens are prerendered, which means that every screen in the game is designed by hand. Laborious work, certainly, but one that has paid off for Black Isle. Once fully exposed, maps are works of beauty within and of themselves. Filled with obscene monsters, beautiful women and grim men, the interaction is visually as impressive as the plot. The usual Planescape villains are here, and some new ones as well, all of who are incredible to behold.

The Infinity engine will be familiar to anyone who has played Fallout or Baldur's Gate, based upon the AD&D system. While there are minor engine differences, most of the basics are there. Most actions such as moving, fighting, talking and the other usual suspects are interfaced with a single left-click on the target or destination. Right-clicking brings up a character's quick menu.



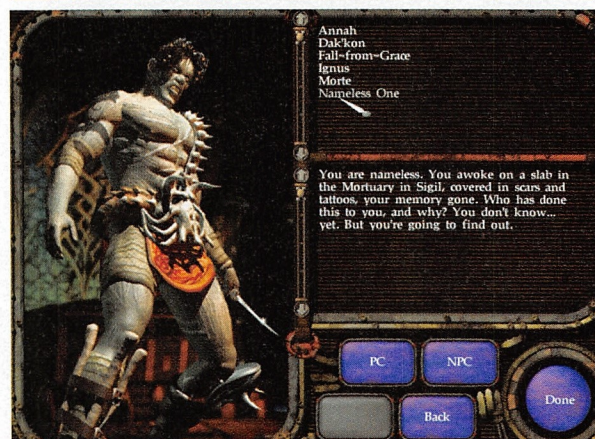
Obligatory mine-cart shot.

From here, you can perform all of the important actions: spells, dialogue, quick item usage, attack/defence/guard, and you have access to all of the menu systems. Character portraits and menu options are available through a bar that sits on the bottom of the screen. Hotkeys can be used for most actions common. It's simple, but shifting items character to character and other micromanagement is a tad slow.

Pick up your weapons

Combat uses the tried and true point-and-click system, which is dangerously simple but nevertheless a standard element of most RPGs. The AI is rather poor, which shows up in two major areas. Firstly, unless specifically told, player characters do not attack any enemy, no matter if they are millimetres away from major combats. Secondly, the point-and-click attacks suffer from poor tracking techniques. Essentially, if you click on a moving target, the PC will move in on an intercept trajectory every time. This can make it hard to plan mass combats without frantically watching the screen. Even then, when the big fights are taking place in a screen area with poor visibility, say behind a wall (rare, but it happens), no amount of planning can help you. Most times this does not matter, but occasionally it leads to frustrating stand offs. Movement suffers from this flaw as well. Characters having to navigate circuitous routes can become lost on the way, often stopping at minor obstacles. Usually just a irritant, it can still lead to unfortunate deaths in combat.

Finally, the game is so damn big that on occasions, no matter how big the system you run it on, when large crowd



It's like looking in a mirror.

scenes are encountered, the game can become rather slow, leaving little choice but to quit and start again. One suspects caching problems. Obviously, the more actions taking place at once, the worse the slow down will be. While these things do detract from the overall experience, do not hesitate to play Planescape: Torment. It is precisely what the RPG industry needed, being complex, mature and something more than a simple find a magic object story. Thought-provoking, touching, and frightening, it is the closest computer gaming has come to reliving the interactive fiction of pen and paper gaming.

Christian Read

PCPP

FOR: Fascinating, superior storytelling, landscape design and character interaction.

AGAINST: Occasionally poor AI, messy combat and awkward micromanagement.

PLUS

Enjoy the Planescape world? www.mimir.net is a great fan site for the RL game which will fill in gaps on the Factions, the Lady of Pain and all the rest of it, as well as explaining a great deal of the slang used in the game.



91

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PETT 992865

Urban Chaos

●Genre: Freestylein' Action ●Players: 1 ●Developer: Mucky Foot ●Publisher: Eidos ●Distributor: Ozisoft ●Price: \$79.95 ●Rating: MA ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P233, 32MB RAM, 400MB HDD, 4xCD, 4MB 3D Videocard (D3D) ●Want: PII 300, 64MB RAM, 600MB HDD, 8xCD, 8MB 3D Videocard (D3D) ●URL: www.muckyfoot.com

Gunning down gang-bangers, beating up muggers, mowing down mad cultists, and ramraiding convenience stores. It's all in a day's work for a Union City cop.

TIPS

• When in a melee fight, the sooner you can pin down an opponent the better. Go for a hold as soon as possible - and don't forget to handcuff them, or else you'll have to take them down again.

• Unless a situation is really urgent, take your time to explore the city. Finding all those skill bonuses will come in very handy later on. Also, make sure that you replay missions to discover all of the bonuses that Urban Chaos has on offer - there are plenty!

Mucky Foot is comprised primarily of former Bullfrog employees who left in the wake of EA's acquisition of the innovative English development house. With titles like Populous, Syndicate and Magic Carpet on their collective CV, the Mucky Foot guys know what makes games tick. This expertise is evident in abundance throughout their first release, Urban Chaos.

With a thirdperson view and a female main character, Urban Chaos might initially appear indebted to Tomb Raider. Yet preliminary investigation will reveal this comparison to be misleading - a platform game this most definitely is not. Rather, with its similar freeform gameplay mechanics, Urban Chaos is a spiritual cousin of Grand Theft Auto.



Darci pauses a while to breathe in the heady fumes of the sewer.



A quick knee to an assailant's groin is a proven technique.

Bat Meets Teeth

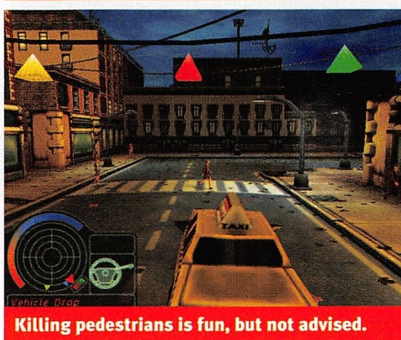
As Darci Stern, rookie cop in the Union City Police Department, you're given strict mission objectives with free reign to complete them as you see fit. Less a virtual city than a digital toy set, Union City offers a nonlinear playground of streets, cars and guns to explore and utilise at your discretion. Primary mission goals can be approached in a variety of ways. The single-minded player might wade into a gang meeting, armed only with a baseball bat and keen to detach teeth from jaw. Cautious types might prefer to sneak onto the rooftop above and eliminate the gang from a sniper's position. The more creative player could even set up a diversion, lure the gang members into an alley and tackle them one at a time, leaving only a pile of embarrassed and handcuffed bodies.

Beyond the main objectives, further exploration of the back alleys and mean streets is usually rewarded with scripted encounters to flesh out the story. Darci might stumble across a mugging in progress or a brawl in the street that needs to be broken up. Such events aren't essential to mission completion, but still remain crucial to the overriding experience. More than just contributing to the atmosphere, these sequences grant an almost - dare I say - Nintendo-esque quality to the design of hidden bonuses and secrets throughout each level. Additionally, with an assortment of skill powerups (for Darci's Strength, Reflexes, etc) scattered around the city,



JUST DON'T LOOK DOWN, OKAY?

I don't really have a fear of heights, but ledges concern me. It's got a lot to do with the knowledge that all that's stopping me from falling is my own free will. Playing Urban Chaos provided a stern test of my faith in the capacity of human beings - specifically myself - to maintain self-control. Whether it's edging along narrow walkways, hanging by her fingernails, scaling ladders or leaping from one building to the next, Darci spends a great deal of her time up on the rooftops of Union City. Crawling into a sniping position and peering out from the very top of a skyscraper will be enough to get you breaking into a sweat. Thankfully, if the vertigo gets too much, you can swing onto a powerline and catch a ride back to street level.



it becomes necessary to repeat missions to collect them all.

Consoling Touch

Couple these powerups with the absence of midlevel saves and Urban Chaos starts to assume a real console feel. But this is no bad thing, as the variety in the gameplay ensures that replaying missions doesn't become tedious. Aside from hand-to-hand combat with fists, knives and baseball bats, there are guns galore to discover and fire indiscriminately at the criminal element. Cars can be commandeered for a hot pursuit, a quick getaway or some casual hit-and-run action. Much to my relief, the mowing down of innocent civilians appears to be no great hindrance to a successful career in the UCPD.

Elsewhere, both crims and cops have no trouble negotiating the many fire escapes, fences and daring rooftop



however, and the resulting noise could be used to your advantage.

Gimme Analogue

Urban Chaos is so good in so many ways that to find fault with it comes as a great disappointment. Especially when the flaws are a direct

terrain and block-shaped buildings are testament to this, though Mucky Foot has worked hard retain the believably grim city atmosphere despite such restrictions. Likewise, unless you have an analogue joystick, the controls translate rather poorly to the keyboard. A dedicated PC version would have benefitted enormously from mouse control.

Nonetheless, Urban Chaos is massively entertaining. Its freeform, nonlinear gameplay is a highly enticing invitation to explore the crazed, pre-millennial streets of Union City. Which is an offer that I found pretty hard to refuse.

David Wildgoose

"...ARMED ONLY WITH A BASEBALL BAT & KEEN TO DETACH TEETH FROM JAW."

leaps needed to navigate around the city. Even the little GPS radar device on screen offers scant warning of a thug jumping from a rooftop to knife you in the back. The clever design also extends to the use of sound. Fellow cops will come running to investigate any gunfire within earshot, while accidentally kicking a can of cola might draw some unwanted attention to your presence. Throw the can across an alley,

consequence of its simultaneous development on the Playstation. Put simply, the level design is hampered by the limitations of Sony's console. The uniformly straight roads, flat

PCPP

FOR: The gameplay mechanics are hugely liberating. Looks and sounds great. Plenty of replay value, too.

AGAINST: The PC is hardly pushed to its limits by this fairly faithful Playstation conversion.

PLUS

www.hairpolice.com
Inspired by Darci's follicular style? Consult the worldwide experts in dreadlocks and discover how to "spread the dread".

hairpolice

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Nocturne

●Genre: Thirdperson Suspense/Horror Action ●Players: 1 ●Developer: Terminal Reality ●Publisher: Gathering of Developers ●Distributor: Jack of all Games ●Price: \$89.95 ●Rating: MA ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P233, 64MB RAM, 500MB HDD ●Want: PII 400, 128MB RAM, 1GB HDD, 3D videocard (D3D) ●URL: <http://www.terminalreality.com/>

Sometimes what makes for great cinema doesn't make for a great game.

TIPS

Obviously, you are going to be in a lot of trouble during the game, especially when fighting multiple foes. So, make sure whenever you are fighting that you have as much space as possible to build up a wall of lead between you and the bad guys. And try at all costs to avoid getting involved in hand-to-hand. The Stranger is one tough bastard, but 700-pound werewolves are a lot tougher. The proper tool for the proper job should also be kept in mind. Don't use solar weapons on zombies, they don't care.

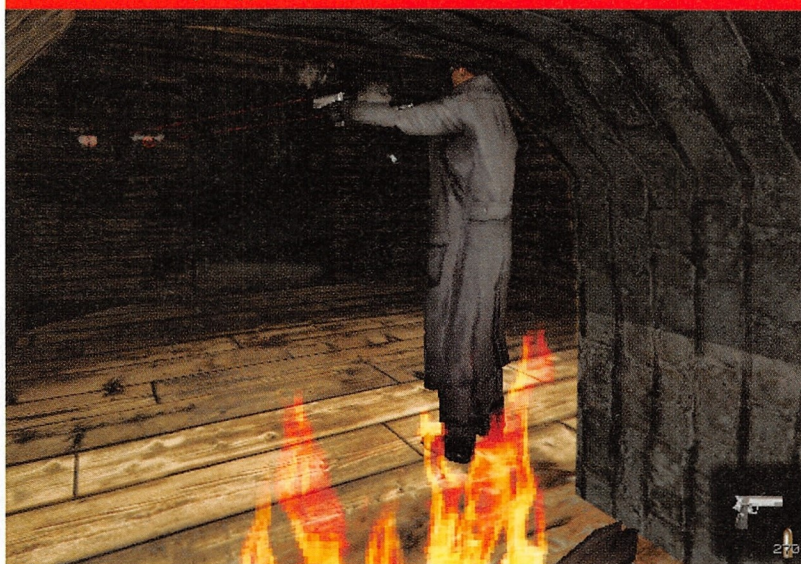
I wanted to love this game. I wanted to love it absolutely and recommend it to everyone without reservation and give it massive ratings and extol its virtues to everyone I know and have ever met.

Instead, I like it. I like it a hell of a lot, but I don't love it - and the whys and wherefores are not that simple. Perhaps we should start at the beginning?

Spook!

Nocturne is a thirdperson action adventure game in which you play the Stranger. Working for an unnamed government agency going by the nickname Spookhouse between the years 1927-1935, it is your mission to perform "Horucide" upon any and all supernatural creatures. Not exactly friendly, but the Stranger is unapologetic about his stance of zero tolerance.

Um, excuse me sire... you appear to be on fire.



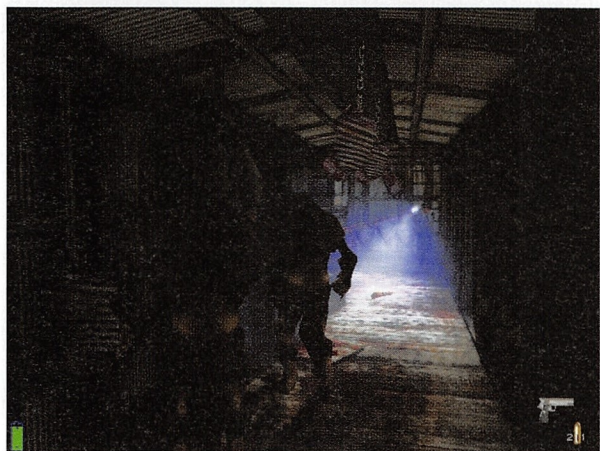
And that perhaps is one of the best features about the game. Both the characterisation and the plot are detailed, intricate and quite absorbing in isolation from the game. Indeed, to this extent Nocturne would make fine television or a movie. You get wrapped up in the events going on, are immersed in the grim Noir world and find yourself paying close attention to the various characters, all deftly written and superbly acted.

As for the game itself, well, it's a tasty little thirdperson action game, with enough atmosphere to impress the

most hardcore gamer. Filled with the mean streets of gangster Chicago, the Black Forest, Western Express trains, castles, graveyards and even pissant little white trash towns, the game is varied in style and expression.

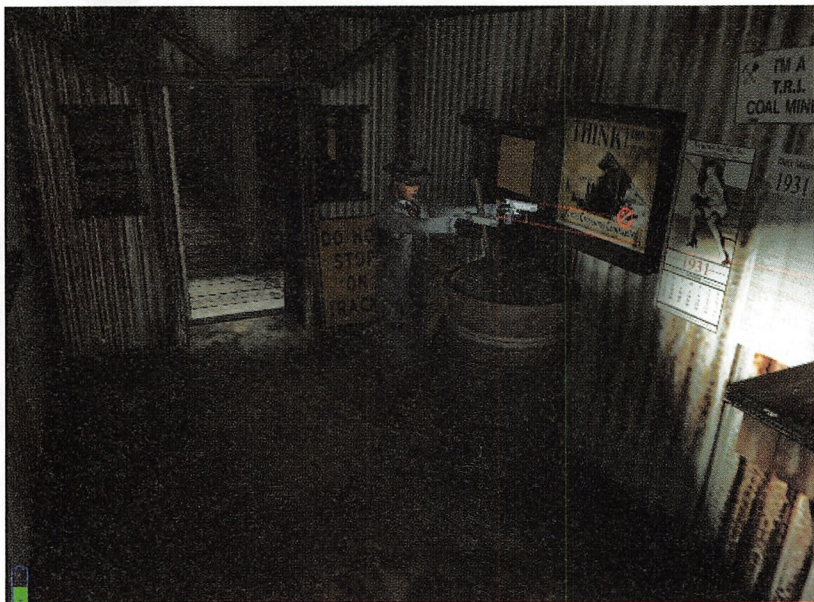
Howls and shadows

Graphically, it's an impressive package, albeit one best suited to the higher end of 3D video hardware. Ensure that your system can handle it before purchase and check www.nvidia.com for downloads as required. But, believe me, it's worth it.



You fool! If only you'd only lift the brim of your hat, your aim would be that much better.





It's good to see that our hero got his eyes tested after his last appearance in PowerPlay.



God, they say, is in the details - and he's right here. Certainly the wonderfully rendered landscapes are beautifully designed, but it's the wolves just glimpsed in the background, the coat blowing in the wind and the gloom-ridden shadows that really do stick in the mind. The recharging torch that slowly runs down in batteries is great prop, but the primitive nightsight is inspired. Shifting the perspective to firstperson, the grey silhouettes can only add to

Sack the cameraman

So, if all this stuff is so good, then why does it just fail to come together into the total package that it should? Well, in short, it's the interface of the game. It is, if I can use so terrible an expression, just so two years ago. It plays very similarly to the first Resident Evil game in that you are given a thirdperson perspective, told to go somewhere, but given no instruction on how to do so. Then the perspective shifts as you move through the terrain.

"...CONSTANT MORPHING OF THE VIEWPOINT CAN BE OVERWHELMING..."

the atmosphere. The buzzing of the batteries is so cool.

Sound is perhaps the most crucial element of any good atmosphere and Nocturne keeps up its premise of being a quality horror experience. Crisp snow crushes underfoot, and in the distance the werewolves you know are stalking you howl. When you are hunted by monsters, the sounds are given great aural depth; you know that they are coming, but you are just not sure where and how far. Flying beasts are the worst: you can't see them, but you can sure as hell hear those leathern wings flap.

While this gives the game a legitimately cinematic feel, the effect is one that mars gameplay. The constant morphing about of the actual viewpoint you play from can be overwhelming and can make the search for bullets, keys, or whatever undeservedly frustrating. This changing perspective can also be infuriating when you are fighting monsters who are in the foreground while you character is

WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST!

During the first mission, Svetlana, the Dhampire, accompanies you. (Half-human, half-vampire.) She'll help you out as you fight a whole stack of werewolves getting through the Black Forest. But don't rely on her at all. She does not hit hard and can get in your way if you are not an absolute master of sensitive controls. Use her to attract the attention of your foes as you get into the clear to get a volley of good shots off. Not the most gentlemanly thing in the world, but Hell, she is a monster after all.



"Climb the ladder Monty..."

obsured behind them. It looks cool and would be a great shot in a film, but can be just plain irritating when you are trying to play a game.

Also, it's pretty much more of the same. Walk somewhere, find a door then go find the companion key. Get in, go find the object A that will slip into fold B. I mean, not every game has to totally go and reinvent the wheel or create quantum leaps forward in game design, but - really - this sort of linear gameplay is outmoded. And it lets down the carefully crafted plot. In other words, interaction ratings are really rather low.

Please don't get me wrong. Nocturne is a great game, and it's lots of fun playing it, but what these flaws really do boil down to is that the game is still thinking in terms of the past. The addition of a floating camera and faster gameplay would have been very welcome. Hopefully the design team will get together for a sequel, correcting the faults.

You'll want to love it, but you'll only really like it.

Christian Read

PLUS

Real life Vampire Hunters do exist. The most famous of these is Sean Manchester, who claims to have fought and killed a variety of demonic forces over the years. Most famous is his "Highgate Vampire" slaying. The good Reverend, incidentally, honestly believes in the existence of demonic forces and urges you all not to play with the occult and games like, for instance, Nocturne. More information on this loon-er, gentleman can be found at <http://members.tripod.co.uk/Hirudo/manchester.html>



PCPP

FOR: Fantastic visuals, dramatic music and sound FX, great backgrounds.

AGAINST: Awkward gameplay, irritating camera changes.

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Dick Johnson V8 Challenge

●Genre: Motorsport Simulation ●Players: 1-8 ●Developer: Torus ●Publisher: Home Software ●Price: \$89.95 ●Rating: G ●Available: Now
 ●Need: PII 233, 32MB RAM, 300MB HDD, 4xCD ●Want: PII 450, 64MB RAM, 8xCD, 3D Videocard (D3D, Glide), 3D Soundcard (EAX) ●URL: www.torus.com.au

Sadly, this racing sim stalled on the grid.

TIPS

- Still got your receipt? Take it back and exchange it for something decent!
- Rumour has it that DJV8C rewards winning the championship with some secret cars.
- Whilst racing any circuit, it's imperative to be cautious as your vehicle enters a corner. Without any type of audio indication that you're pushing too hard, some commonsense mixed with a little guess work is required.

Well, Dick Johnson and ol' Brocky have now retired, and as the Australian Touring Car Championship says goodbye to two of the most influential racers of the modern era, a new group of eager rookies are set to write their names in glory. Just in time for the new year, petrolhead fans everywhere now have the opportunity to jump into the driver's seat and take on the mountain in the first sim ever based on the Australian Touring Car scene, Dick Johnson V8 Challenge.

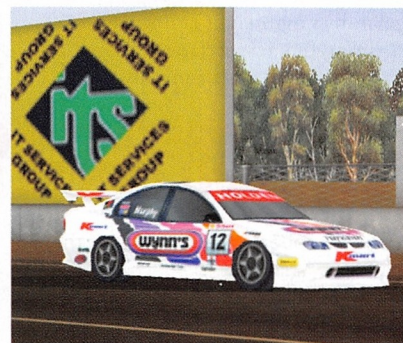
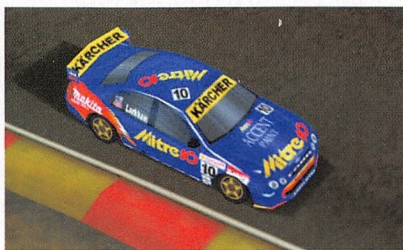
Is something missing?

The feeling that DJV8C is only really half a game is made evident in more than one area. There is no car setup to be found, only four tracks on which to race, and one of the sports major players, namely the Holden Racing Team, is nowhere to be found. After installation and just a few hours behind the wheel, I was already scanning my CD shelf for another game to play.

The intro movie, a feature of games that is generally used to draw a player into the experience through combinations of visual and audio stimuli, is tragically lifeless and poorly thought-out, presenting a collection of Australian Touring Car clips run in low resolution accompanied by some weak attempt at music. The selection menus, which



The clever "sitting on the bonnet" view.



Not exactly a career highlight.

get a little annoying due to the similarity between the colour of selected and unselected options, would seem more at home in a console title as there is no mouse control to speak of. Thankfully, all the standard race modes exist, including quick race, time trial, championship and multiplayer.

Screechless

If you're after a serious sim with all the fluff and trimmings, this may not

SETTING THE PACE

The world of PC gaming has become a complex world in which to exist. With genres melding left, right and centre, players are continually left in a daze by the constant influx of quality titles flooding our local game stores. For the majority of game developers, each new release heralds the dawn of some new fantastic concept or feature. Many would argue about the true beginnings of the virtual motorsport genre, but for me it was on the Commodore 64, in the humble

form of Pit Stop II. The lineage only became bigger and better as we bore witness to titles such as Accolade Grand Prix, Test Drive, Grand Prix World Championships, Grand Prix 2 and finally to the simulations of today's high standards like Grand Prix Legends, NASCAR 3, GP500, etc. For a game like DJV8C to be released at this great stage in the world of virtual motorsport, one can only assume the developers haven't played a racing sim since the mid nineties!

And the interior window misting caused a great calamity.



What about the precision driving team mode?



Chemistry in action.



be your cup of tea. With car physics that will appeal only to the most uninitiated virtual drivers, DJV8C is an ideal choice for those looking to just have a quick spin. The seriously lacking sense of speed and missing in-car view cause DJV8C to fail in its attempt to grasp the true feeling of piloting a meaty V8. With an obvious lack of inertia whilst racing any vehicle on a PC, the main aspect used by the virtual driver for judging the limits of a car is that helpful tyre screech. Unfortunately, it's missing from DJV8C. Such an oversight increases the amount of guesswork required to produce a scorching lap time, and detracts hugely from the levels of immersion and realism presented. With just a little

The cars themselves, though accurately painted in the appropriate team colours, look great from a distance, but up close begin to appear artificial and generic. Tyre smoke and flaming bursts of exhaust can be seen every now and then, and when the car loses control and spins into the dirt, bucketloads of gravel and grass are thrown into the air.

Traffic jams

DJV8C ran nicely on my PII 450 with a Voodoo 3 card at 800 x 600. However, when caught in traffic, things started to get bogged down. This, coupled with a few minor graphical glitches here and there, subtracts yet again from that ever-



we end up with are V8s that sound like V6s! There is no noticeable change in engine noise from car to car, and as mentioned earlier, the helpful sound of a screeching tyre on the edge of adhesion is sadly missing.

It may seem that DJV8C has been given a hard time here as PCPP, but in our defence, the standards for this genre have been clearly set by games such as TOCA. To release a product in 2000 which would be more at home back in 1995, and then charge ninety dollars for it, is an insult to the gamers of today. DJV8C doesn't exactly stand tall for the Aussie game developing community, and in what would seem a great title in name alone, is left severely wanting in almost all areas. A real missed opportunity.

Edward Fox

"THE SCALE OF SOME HILLS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SLIGHTLY EXAGGERATED"

more time spent perfecting vehicle physics, DJV8C could have easily impressed in this department.

The tracks, which include Bathurst, Winston Park, Oran Park and Sandown, are all recreated nicely. From firsthand experience at two of these circuits I was surprised at the level of accuracy. However, in the case of the famous Mt. Panorama track at Bathurst, the scale of some hills appears to have been slightly exaggerated. This causes the car to fishtail uncontrollably at sections of the circuit when driven at anything above sixty clicks.

decreasing level of immersion. There is, thankfully, an extensive visual control panel presented prior to game launch, which in conjunction with the game manual can be used to get the most out of any video card.

The audio within DJV8C is dreadful, and that's being kind. With a meagre effort at implementing 3D sound, what

FOR: Based on one of the world's best Touring Car competitions.

AGAINST: Sadly lacking in immersion and quality. Disappointing effort for a homegrown flavour of the sport.

PLUS

<http://www.toca.com.au/>
What's new in touring cars for 2000?

RACE RESULTS
01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10



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Age of Wonders

●Genre: Turn-based Tolkien ●Players: 1-4 ●Developer: Triumph Studios ●Publisher: Gathering of Developers ●Distributor: Take 2 ●Price: \$TBA ●Rating: TBA ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P166, 32MB RAM, 4xCD, 300MB HDD ●Want: PII 300, 64MB RAM ●URL: www.ageofwonders.com

It's the age of elves, more like.

TIPS

- Be aware that the magic of your hero can be used not only in battle but in normal play as well. You can change the countryside to become more productive, teleport your party to a safe town or even create new special units. Don't neglect this part of your magic arsenal.
- You need to balance your income with the support of your troops. It's no good having a giant army that you can't feed! Make sure you have some of your towns producing merchandise so that your gold reserves can pay for your army. Otherwise you'll be plagued by deserters!

There are many testaments to the lasting value of the writings of J.R.R. Tolkien. One is the puppet production of *The Hobbit* that has been touring major Australian capital cities recently. Another is the much discussed motion picture production of *The Lord of the Rings* (and the rumour of the hobbits being played by Joe Pesci and Robert De Niro - I kid you not!). Yet another is the lasting impression the world of Middle Earth has had on modern gaming. Aside from the various MUDs set in this fantasy world and the (now cancelled) online RPG entitled *Middle Earth*, Tolkien's epic is an undeniable influence in all kinds of fantasy writing and gaming. *Age of Wonders* is the latest fantasy title to emerge with a definite case of the hobbits.

It's a keeper

Set in the early days of the world, *Age of Wonders* is another game in the turn-based strategy style of *Heroes of Might and Magic*. Tolkien's influence is most obvious in the fact that this game centres around the politics of war between unique factions. *Age of Wonders* is a nicely balanced strategy title with a lot of depth in combat and unit development. In the campaign (or single player) game, you can choose to play as either the Keepers, the good



So he's offering us 206 gold to join us. The git.

elves, or the Cult of Storms, the dark elves. Here, you play through the levels and move across the continent (strangely familiar to Europe) to the Valley of Wonders (roughly where the Middle East would be... hmmm...) In the scenario game, you can choose to be anyone of the 16 races in the game. This type of game is basically skirmish mode in a variety of locations and can be played against CPU or human opponents via LAN, internet or email play.

Nympho clerics

You begin most games with one hero who gains levels of experience over time, offering the chance to augment their skills. These include magic skills as well as combat and other more general abilities. Depending on the kind of game you're playing, abilities are cumulative. Other lesser warriors need to be produced, or perhaps found. Some of these are special magic-users, like the satyr, nymph and cleric. The remaining are foot soldiers of various types or special units like the battering ram. From these forces you construct parties of your own choosing that can grow to a maximum of eight units. Beware, units from parties spontaneously join when



Our Malcolm could show the hobbits a thing or two about town planning.

TWO KINDS OF BATTLES

In *Age of Wonders* you can choose to fight your battles in two ways: **Tactical or Automatic**. The Tactical screen offers you the chance to move your individual units around the map exactly as you move your parties on the world map, engaging the enemy as you please. The Automatic takes you to a different playing field, where the actions of your units and those of your enemy are simulated.

The Automatic option is good if you don't want to spend the time in battle and the Tactical option

gives you the chance to test your combat skills. You can also set the way that combat is fought to one or the other in game.

You might be tempted to use the Automatic battle screen for all of your battles - don't! The Tactical Battle offers you the chance to use the magic of your stronger units in more creative ways and you're more likely to leave with your army intact. The Automatic battle options is good when you greatly outnumber your opponents but if in any doubt, go tactical!

Manual



And the shadows descended as news of a party at the Stongasoxs got around...



occupying the same position and once they're formed, they cannot be split unless by death.

Essential resources

The production of units is dependent on the gold you have available, as well as the nature of the

of mana. With these things in mind, control of resources is very important in *Age of Wonders*.

There is a nice balance between battle and resource management, and the game maintains interest because of it. *Age of Wonders* is a solid game on all fronts, especially multiplayer

"...LATEST FANTASY TITLE WITH A DEFINITE CASE OF THE HOBBITS."

town in which you plan to build them. You will need to upgrade a town in order to build more advanced units. Units also require long term support. While gold is needed for units and structures, mana is needed for the various spells that become available to your hero. Interestingly, spells become part of all aspects of the game - not just in battle. There are instantaneous spells for battle and other long term spells that will require a lasting supply

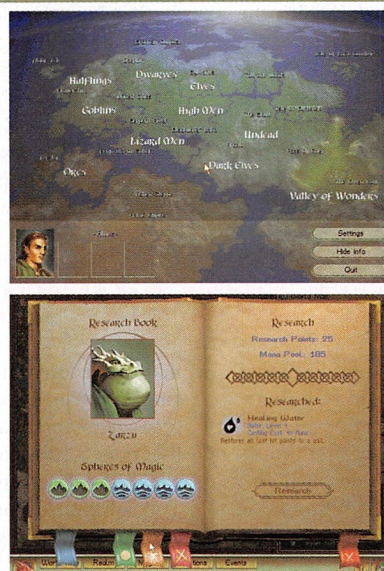
gaming. The enemy AI is a little on the weak side, being a little predictable. All in all, this is a solid turn-based title and definitely worth a look for fans of fantasy gaming.

John Dewhurst

PCPP

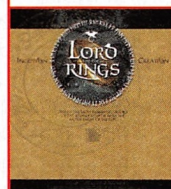
FOR: Good interface, nice combat and resource management concepts, solid turn based strategy titles, hours of fun!

AGAINST: AI is a little uninspiring, nothing new for fans of the genre.



PLUS

www.lordofthering.net
This is the official site for the trilogy of movies based on Tolkien's epic. There are also many unofficial sites around with lots of pictures, rumours, the lot! Try www.theonering.com.



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Star Trek: Hidden Evil

●Genre: Starfleet Adventure Frolic ●Players: 1 ●Developer: Presto Studios ●Publisher: Activision ●Distributor: Activision ●Price: \$89.95 ●Rating: G8+ ●Available: Now
●Need: P200, 32MB RAM, 305MB HDD, 4MB Videocard ●Want: PII 300, 64MB RAM, 3D Videocard (D3D) ●URL: www.activision.com

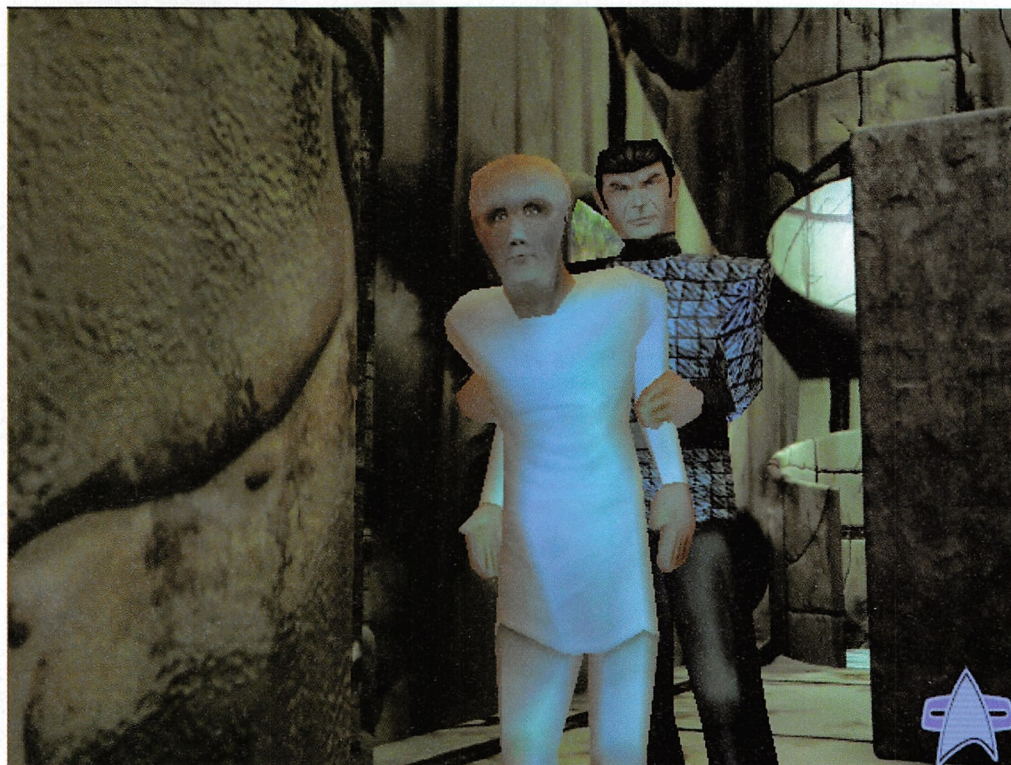
Go frolicking amongst the aliens with Patrick Stewart and Brent Spiner.

This adventure into Next Generation Starfleet territory takes place subsequent to the feature film *Star Trek: Insurrection*. You take the role of Ensign Sovok, a new recruit from the Academy, eager to get into the midst of the action. Being sent to Outpost 40 near the Ba'ku planet in the Briar Patch doesn't seem like the exciting assignment you would have liked. But trouble between the Son'a and Ba'ku communities means that you are called to aid Captain Jean-Luc Picard. As you stand before your idol, many things race through your mind, but you can only think of one thing to say to him: "So, uhh, tell me more about Beverly Crusher..."

Phantom Frolics

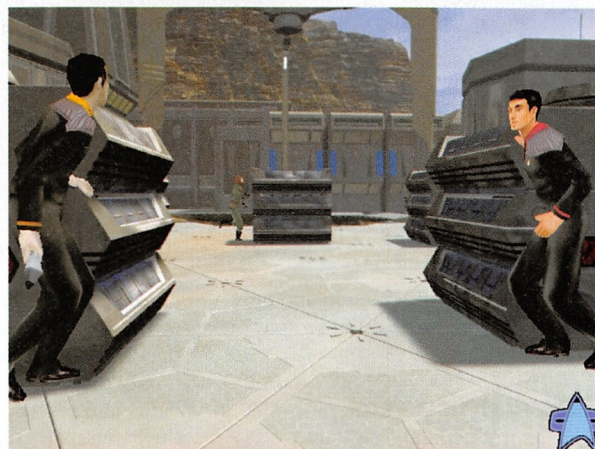
Star Trek: Hidden Evil is an action game with a healthy dollop of puzzle solving. There is a nice story that accompanies all of this, so I suppose this constitutes an adventure game (in much the same way that *The Phantom Menace* qualifies as one long trailer). Tags aside, it has that adventuring spirit at least, and as Ensign Sovok you have the chance to frolic around very restricted areas, doing fairly straightforward things in order to advance to the next mission.

While many games in this genre seem to fail as games (sales, as we all know do not a great game make), there's something about *Hidden Evil* that makes it work. Certainly it's the stunning artwork that is featured in the underground areas of the Son'a colony. The music too is very impressive, if a little on the tiny synthesised side. The voice acting of Patrick Stewart and indeed all of the cast helps to give this title some



solving. In the league of *The Phantom Menace*, *Hidden Evil* is most pedestrian adventuring. This is not challenging at all. It's a credit to the game, then, that I felt compelled to keep going, to see what would happen to our young ensign. This is good light-hearted fun for younger gamers and fans of easy action alike.

Star Trek: *Hidden Evil* is certainly not made for the aging Trekkies out there, which makes me wonder - are there young Star Trek fans? If not, then this title could certainly help to make a few more. This is a very effective title, considering its target audience of children to mid-teens. It's just a pity



Note how bodies contour to local architecture.

"...PATRICK STEWART HELPS GIVE THIS TITLE SOME GRAVITY."

gravity. Despite the leap of faith that some lowly recruit would be doing anything but making coffee and acting as cannon fodder for his first three years, the events of *Hidden Evil* are as believable as any Star Trek story. You can think - for only a moment, mind - that you are an ensign amongst these great figures of science fiction!

Pedestrian Pace

The actual gameplay is another matter. It's simple point-and-shoot combat and paint-by-numbers puzzle

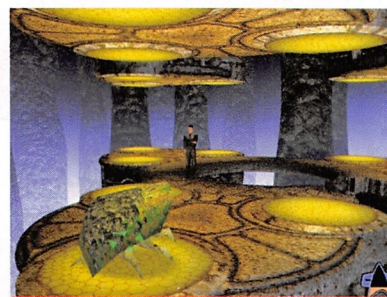
solving. that Activision didn't aim for more, since the groundwork was there for a great game for all ages. Let's hope that the money they make on *Hidden Evil* allows the developers to make a Star Trek adventure game for the true aficionados of the series.

John Dewhurst

PLUS

www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Chateau/1567/index.html

Check out this site for Gates McFadden, better known as Beverly Crusher.



Hmm, must be aliens.

PCPP

FOR: Beautiful sound and vision, solid gaming for the younger gamer, complete with real actor's voices. Nice mix of easy action and puzzle solving.

AGAINST: No replay value, not a real challenge for most, certainly for young gamers.

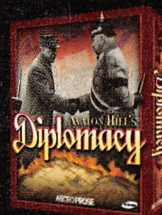
69

Try diplomacy first.

AVALON HILL'S Diplomacy

You can always invade them later.

Based on "the greatest board game invented this century" (Games Magazine), Diplomacy is a strategy game of skill and cunning negotiation set amongst the powers at the turn of the 20th century. You exist in a precarious balance of power on the verge of one of the most influential times in modern history - a time where deviousness pays. No one can get ahead alone: You need your allies but can you trust them? Trust, betrayal, faith and treachery are prime ingredients in victory.



CD-ROM

MICROPROSE



Delta Force 2

●Genre: FPS Tactical Sim ●Players: 1-50 ●Developer: NovaLogic ●Publisher: Novalogic ●Distributor: EA ●Price: \$69-95 ●Rating: G ●Available: Now
 ●Need: PII 450, 64MB RAM, 165GB HDD, 32bit Videocard (D3D) ●Want: PIII, 128MB RAM ●URL: www.novalogic.com

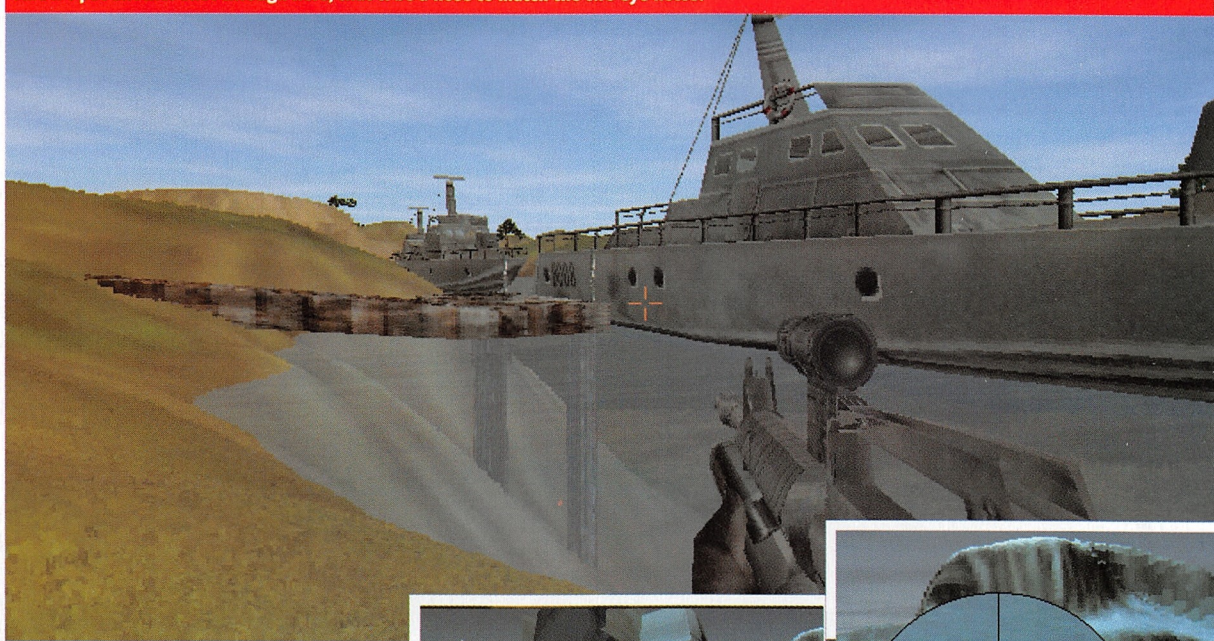
Novalogic may have defined the military FPS with the original Delta Force, but can the sequel compete with the likes of SWAT 3 and Rogue Spear?

TIPS

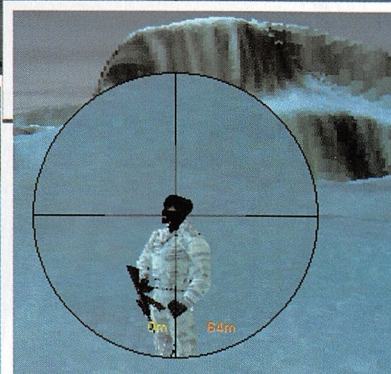
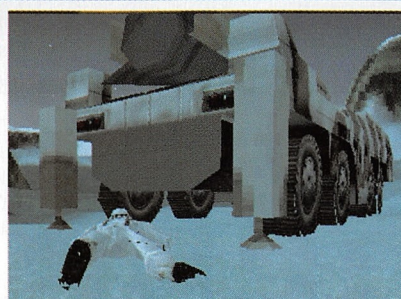
GO LOW... GO SLOW!
 Maintain stealth for as long as you can in every mission. Crawling in the prone position is slow, but it's the only way you can move undetected once you're close to the enemy. Crouch mode should be used for all other movement. Check the commander's map after each bound, and look for any targets to practice your sniping skills on. It's best to turn off everything but 'people' as you approach the action. If the enemy is impolite enough to return fire, withdraw behind a rise in the ground and approach from a slightly different direction. Ignore the recommended waypoints because they will lead to disaster - use an indirect approach whenever possible and concentrate on taking out as many of the enemy as you can before hitting the main objective. Go around hills rather than over the top of them. Use scope mode as your default configuration when covering large expanses of ground - it will disappear during movement and be on hand whenever you stop.



And if I put another shot through here, that'll be a nose to match the two eye holes.



Times have been good for fans of military-style action games, with the emergence of a host of new titles and sequels led by the instant classic Rogue Spear. In a tough environment, Delta Force 2 manages to hold its own, albeit with some disappointments. Although veterans of the original might think it's just more of the same, the same is pretty good - and Delta Force 2 probably has enough new features to satisfy old hands as well as first-timers.



And the weather today

Once again you're a member of the US Army's elite commando organisation, engaged in a variety of missions against terrorists and paramilitary organisations. The action occurs throughout the world in all types of weather, and you have access to a wide range of weapons and equipment, fire support, and other friendly troops. Delta Force 2 offers two campaigns and 20 single missions, covering assault, hostage rescue and reconnaissance operations. A comprehensive (and complex) mission editor completes the package.

Delta Force 2's mission briefings are well supported by graphics, and the general preparation phase of the game is comparable to similar titles. Objectives are well explained, and players have the usual option of accepting default kit or specifying preferred weapons and equipment. The high quality commander's map is probably the standout feature of this game, enabling you to tailor the displayed information to suit your needs. Recommended waypoints are provided (avoid them at all

costs!) and changes to the route can be made in simple click and drag fashion. Delta Force 2 is clearly about FPS action rather than planning, but there's enough here to add a degree of tactical thinking to the game.

Acronyms ahoy

Once you hit the DZ (Drop Zone) things fly along at a fairly hectic pace. The GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) map lets you move quickly towards the action, highlighting enemy and friendly troop movements, objectives and waypoints. Be warned though, shots still tend to ring out unexpectedly. All key information is presented onscreen, with a quick glance confirming body position, active weapons and equipment, and essential mission data. A press of a button cycles through other friendly teams and the images obtained by pre-positioned surveillance cameras.

Delta Force 2 has received some criticism for the quality of its graphics and slow framerates on mid-range systems, and I'd have to agree on both counts. Novalogic have stuck with their Voxel Space engine, thereby short-



Chillie suits: stealthy.

FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD

The Commander's Map feature in Delta Force 2 is a highlight of the game, and it's ably supported by the quick reference GPS map at the bottom of the screen. The information provided includes waypoints, identified enemy positions, buildings, vehicles and waypoints. Click on an

item, and key data is displayed in the right hand display. Waypoints can be changed here, and orders issued to the other teams. The ability to deselect specific items reduces clutter and lets you concentrate on the task at hand, such as ambushing enemy patrols. The screen also provides access to

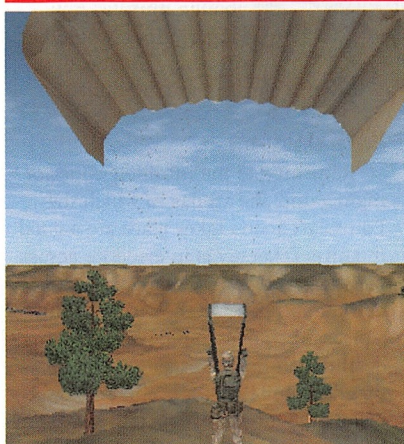
weapon and equipment data, team information and the mission briefing. The small GPS map is enough to keep you moving quickly in the right direction, and the contour toggle is particularly useful when you're trying to find an alternative route to an enemy position.



Teach them Noughts & Crosses, please!



Des models the latest in combat goggles.



changing the host of players running 3dfx cards, and the suggested system specs are optimistic to say the least. While some views, such as the riflescope, offer good quality at the higher resolutions, anything at a distance is almost impossible to pick out - and early warning is essential in most missions. Below par graphics is the achilles heel of Delta Force 2, and you need a fast system to get the best out of this game. At 800x600, it crawled on a PIII 450!

depending on your plan. This problem is compounded by the fact that no option exists to take control of another team, even if your own character is killed. This is a major omission in a game that at least purports to have a team aspect.

Delta Force 2 sounds great, and the new weather effects add a lot to the atmosphere of the game. Many missions rely on stealth, and the tension builds up quickly as you approach the objective. Plenty of equipment is

straightforward if you've played this type of game before. Opinions will vary on this one, but the lack of a save game feature is very frustrating in what is otherwise a solid interface.

Delta Force 2 is no Rogue Spear, but it's a far cheaper alternative (*Unless you have to upgrade your PC - Ed*). Fast-paced with a very shallow learning curve, the number and range of missions will keep you occupied for some time. Whilst the graphics are below par compared to some other titles, and the system specs high, those faults are largely offset by the way it plays. It's already a big hit online at NovaWorld, and looks set to become a firm favourite amongst wannabe commandos. A better attempt at team co-ordination would have seen a higher score, but Delta Force 2 is a reasonable buy for owners of a fast system.

Major Des McNicholas

"...ENGAGED IN A VARIETY OF MISSIONS AGAINST TERRORISTS..."

How's the AI?

The missions are challenging and generally realistic, although the enemy AI is none too bright at the easy difficulty setting. Their reactions vary during mission replays, ranging from withdrawal and consolidation through to sniping and all out assault. In fact, friendly AI is probably of more concern, as their actions are controlled by event-triggers that may or may not occur

available, and the treatment of special items such as satchel charges, laser designators and anti-armour weapons is particularly impressive. The manual is a bit light on, but most actions are

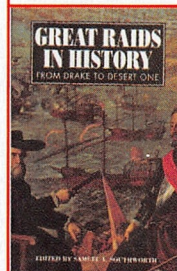
PCPP

FOR: Simple interface and fast learning curve. Great gameplay offsets some of the problems. Comes with a keyboard template - we love that!

AGAINST: Graphics, framerate, and no real use for the other teams. No in game save feature - we hate that!

PLUS

Big and small raids have always played a key role in warfare. 'Great Raids in History - From Drake to Desert One' spans the last 400 years of raiding, including the ill-fated Delta Force attempt to rescue US hostages in Iran.



78

Nerf Arena

●Genre: Soft-centred Shooter ●Players: 1-Multi (LAN, Internet) ●Developer: Visionary Media ●Publisher: Hasbro Interactive ●Hasbro Interactive ●Price: \$49.95 ●Rating: M ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P200 MMX, 32MB RAM, 4xCD, 120MB HDD, 2MB Videocard ●Want: PII 300, 64MB RAM, 275MB HDD, 3D Videocard (D3D, Glide) ●URL: www.hasbro-interactive.com/atari

Does FPS actually stand for Foam-Person Shooter?

TIPS

- Keep a close eye on the health meter, as it's really the only way of knowing whether you're taking damage.
- Shoot the static targets whenever you pass by one. It's an easy and painless way to accumulate points, after all.
- Make good use of the secondary fire modes - they're generally far more effective than the primary weapons.
- In the Speedblast races, just run for it and don't worry about shooting anyone. The only exception is on straight paths where you can run backwards and fire at opponents trailing behind.
- In the Ballblast, don't forget to shoot your opponents while hunting for the balls. The most points still wins, remember.



Behind you, foam-boy!

You must know Nerf. It's the modern day equivalent of Cowboys & Indians. You run around, wielding toy guns, trying to shoot variously shaped foam pellets at each other. Yes, it's deathmatching - but in real life. Except, that is, now we have a virtual version, too. And unlike the Quakes and Unreals of this world, this is deathmatching without any deaths, nor indeed any blood, gore or gibs. Of course, this doesn't make it a good game, merely a sanitised, family friendly one.

Triple Blast

Like other similarly-themed recent titles, Nerf Arena structures its single player game in tiers - eight in

total, including a training run and a championship finale. There is a trio of rather different gameplay modes to tackle in each, and it's necessary to complete all three in order to progress to the next tier. Pointblast is the one likely to consume most of your time, being your fairly standard deathmatch free-for-all. Besides the fact you're firing virtual foam balls at each other, the only notable difference between this mode and that of Quake III is that a bout is won by accumulating the most points as opposed to frags. There are numerous ways to score points: shooting certain transient targets in each arena is one; hitting the targets each player has on his or her bodysuit is another. Of most value, though, is pocketing the bonus token after taking someone down.

Speedblast

and Ballblast are the titles of the remaining two modes. Ballblast is a slight variation on Pointblast, except the primary aim is to find seven coloured balls and, well, blast them, I suppose, through one of several goals in the arena. When someone has scored with all seven balls, it's game over and the player with the most points wins. As an attempt at something new, it's certainly commendable, but hardly compelling enough to warrant too much attention. Even less successful is the Speedblast mode, where shooting takes a backseat to simply blundering headlong through a checkpoint race. It's all over in about a minute - any longer, mind, would be stretching an already thin idea to breaking point.

Unreal Power

Returning to the infinitely superior main game, the arenas in which the Pointblast action takes place are a good mixture. Diversity is in evidence across the broad range of scenery, with the domination of bright colours making for a pleasant change to the typically grim deathmatch mise en scene. Though there's a tendency for each arena to be just a little too large, especially with fewer than four players, the imagination shown in the design is cause enough to forget such quibbles. Also, the water effects are simply gorgeous. It must be said the Unreal engine has been well used.

The weapons each have a secondary fire mode like in Unreal Tournament, and this is definitely another area where Nerf Arena impresses. From the simple (the Wildfire, for instance, switches from singleshoot to multiples) to the cool (the Sidewinder allows the guidance of the missile from a firstperson view) to the damn funny (the Scattershot shoots a ball of glue, so you can halt an opponent in his tracks and nail him with little resistance), the secondary fire modes do add plenty of variety. You can never be sure exactly what your opponent is going to hit you with next. Despite this, all the weapons lack impact, and it's never entirely clear whether you've scored a hit. As a result, the satisfaction gained from a frag is diminished significantly.

Hard Of Hearing

Despite its undoubted good looks and highly entertaining arsenal, there are two



Shiny happy people shooting each other. But don't worry kids, it doesn't hurt!



THE WIMP TAKES ALL

Where Quake III: Arena and Unreal Tournament have their fair share of annoying moments when some Johnny-come-lately rudely enters the duel you've been having and steals your frag, Nerf Arena's points system only multiplies the frequency of this frustrating occurrence. When someone is fragged they leave behind a bonus token, the value of which depends on their current ranking in the bout. Anyone can collect the bonus, not just the player who scored the frag, so if you aren't first there then you miss out on the reward. That's right, Nerf Arena is a deathmatch game that actually encourages cowardice. Which, although an oddly appealing concept in theory, is just plain crap from a design point of view.



"...IT'S NEVER ENTIRELY CLEAR WHETHER YOU'VE SCORED A HIT."

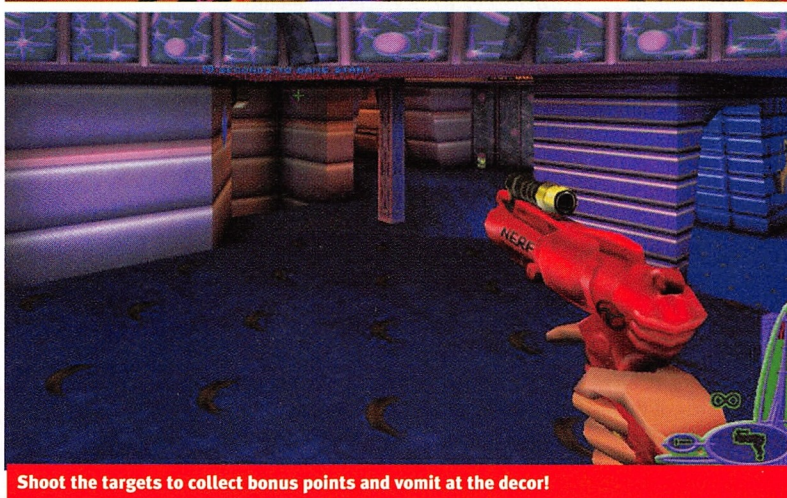
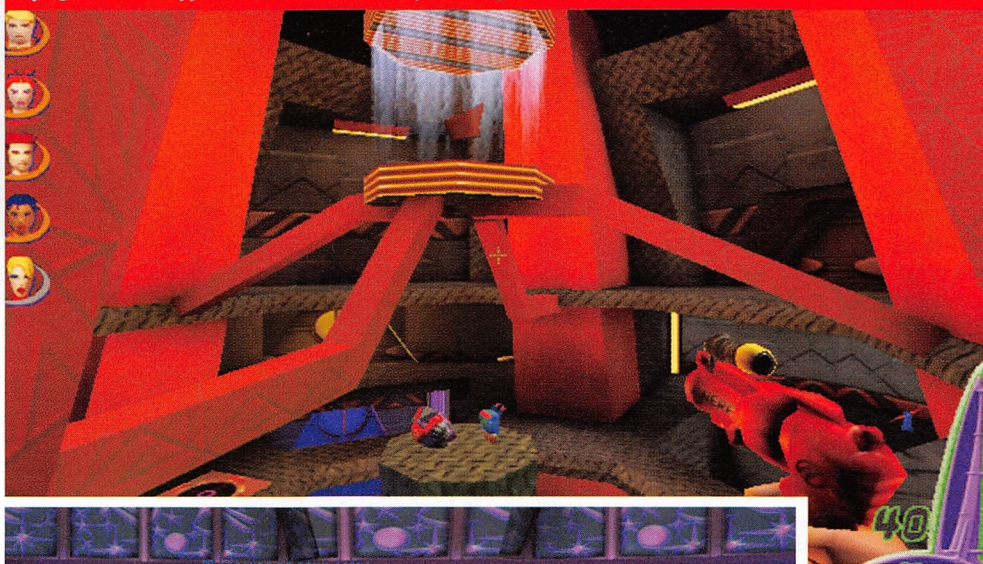


major gameplay issues that spoil Nerf Arena. AI anomalies occur regularly, as "bots" get stuck on corners or run on the spot. They also have this unnerving habit of repeatedly jumping on bouncy pads, especially whilst waiting for a weapon to respawn. The most telling flaw, however, is the extremely poor use of sound. All footsteps are completely silent, so you've got no idea where anyone is until they enter your field of vision. Likewise, no noise is made when someone jumps or collects a powerup, both telltale signs of an opponent's location that are sorely missed here. The absence of such audio cues means each bout degenerates into a battle of sheer luck, where good fortune triumphs over superior skill.

Ultimately, Nerf Arena remains a game that fails to fulfil its undoubted potential. The winning concept simply hasn't departed far enough from the Quake-style formula, and as such its novelty proves an insufficient distraction from the inferior deathmatch gameplay. There are a number of refreshingly original ideas here, though they're unfortunately compromised by several fundamental flaws. But, still, seen as a cute 'n' cuddly ('n' cheap!) alternative to Quake III, Nerf Arena will manage to put a smile on your face. It's good, clean fun, innit?

David Wildgoose

Trying to shoot a support beam with a foam ball just ain't gonna work.



Shoot the targets to collect bonus points and vomit at the decor!

PCPP

FOR: Level design is mostly good, and the weapons work well - especially with the aid of their secondary fire modes. Nice graphics, too..

AGAINST: The lack of useful sound effects really harms the gameplay. You'll need four players for a decent multiplayer game.

PLUS

<http://www.flash.net/~spon1/NERFG1.HTM>
Unload a few rounds at the Die Hard Nerf Warrior homepage. Just remember, No Girlie Men Allowed!



70

Codename: Eagle

●Genre: First Person Commie-Shooter ●Players: 1-16 ●Developer: Refraction Games ●Publisher: Take 2 Interactive ●Distributor: Jack of All Games ●Price: \$89.95 ●Rating: MA15+ ●Available: Now
 ●Need: Win95/98, P200 MMX, 280MB HD, 4x CD ROM, 32MB RAM, 3D Videocard (D3D) ●Want: PII 300, 570MB HD, 16x CD ROM, 64MB RAM ●URL: www.take2games.com

Right ho! A jolly good rollicking wartime adventure awaits! Pip pip!



Those spotlights almost look real!

Codename: Eagle is a first person shooter, first and foremost. Whatever else you add to an FPS, you can't change its very nature. So sadly, even if you have a killer storyline, the most snappy repartee and the sharpest hero ever, if the action element is lacking then the game won't be a bestseller. It is a credit to the developers of Codename: Eagle that it's the enjoyable gaming experience it is, because the basic action elements are average at best.

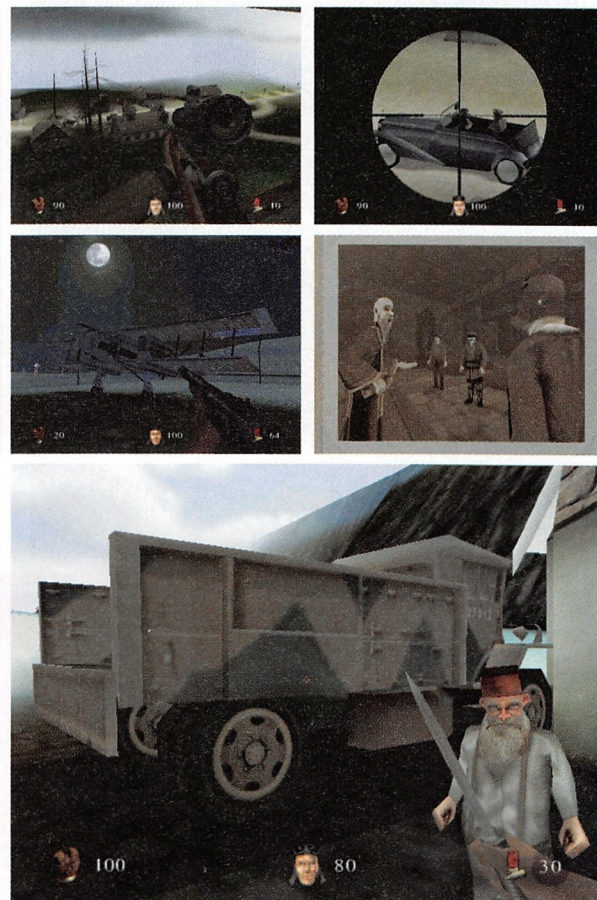
Rollicking adventure

Codename: Eagle takes place in a parallel world, where the march west by Russia in the early part of the C20th, was never halted and Moscow ruled continental Europe with an iron curtain... I mean fist. You are Red, a mercenary for the good guys in the West (naturally). Through the course of the twelve missions, you have to single-handedly

the newsreel-style story sections, Codename: Eagle seemed to be a poke in the eye of all those war escapade myths. But no, this game is fairly sincere in its aim: a rollicking adventure, home in time for tea, what? There's a little too much homage and not enough fun (whether it be excitement or piss-take, regardless) for this to work. And honestly, it doesn't really hit the mark. For many gamers, this won't really satisfy.

Brutal bushes

The controls in Codename: Eagle are generally good but lack realism. This is most obvious with the sniper rifle, where you can actually move around and maintain your sights in the viewfinder! Your enemies for the most part are particularly stupid. Rather than work co-operatively, they will run at you or shoot from where they are, even if



There's a lot that could have been improved upon. But when you're actually playing the game, it's fairly enjoyable and the missions do offer a lot of the thrills you'd expect from wartime fantasies. Codename: Eagle might be a challenge for some gamers, but for the Quake-literate, this is a walk in the park and realistically there's not much replay value for most. With the below par weapons, this is hardly going to make a splash in multiplayer.

Identity crisis

Regardless, it's good that even an average game like this one can still offer enough enjoyment to be (mostly) worthwhile. The problem is that Codename: Eagle tries to do a lot of different things and doesn't end up doing any of them exceptionally. That is perhaps one of the most obvious pitfalls in the current trend of cross-bred game styles.

John Dewhurst

"YOUR ENEMIES FOR THE MOST PART ARE PARTICULARLY STUPID."

knock the Russian forces by taking out key targets. So of course you do the things that have become standards of the genre: close combat, espionage, destroying specific targets, sniping, using vehicles and so on. The game is mission-based and it looks to rely heavily on narrative for much of its weight.

First impressions suggest a heavy parody in the story of Codename: Eagle. With the thick Russian drawls, the stiff "how-do-you-do?" English accents and

you are well out of range. This becomes painfully apparent when they get stuck behind a bush or a tree. Average controls, average enemies - the action side of the game isn't completely successful for these reasons.

PLUS
<http://www.phill.co.uk/comedy/allo/index.html>
 'Allo 'Allo.
 In the true spirit of Codename Eagle, 'Allo 'Allo was a superb wartime satire which was aired during the eighties. Here lies a plethora of related info.

PCPP

FOR: Lively and playable FPS that delivers accessible action, with a competent, if uninspiring story.

AGAINST: Unrealistic controls, silly enemies, little replay value, heir to Half Life it ain't!

64

Spec Ops 2: Green Beret

●Genre: Squad Based(ish) FPS ●Players: 1-16 ●Developer: Zombie Studios ●Publisher: Talonsoft ●Distributor: Jack of All Games ●Price: \$89-95 ●Rating: MA 15+ ●Available: Now
●Need: P200 MMX; 32MB RAM; 150MB HD; 8MB 3D Video Card. ●Want: PII 350; 64MB RAM ●URL: www.specops2.com

Given what others have done to the genre that this game pioneered, this one should have been so much more.

Having paved the way for team based FPS with Zombie Studios' Spec Ops: US Army Rangers (Ranger Assault in Australia - PCPP#28: 84%), Talonsoft faced a major challenge in matching the class of more recent offerings, particularly given the fact that Rainbow 6 has since redefined the genre. Spec Ops 2 offers some improvements on the original, but it could (and should) have been so much more. Old hands will probably be disappointed with this missed opportunity, while new players will compare it unfavourably with the alternatives.

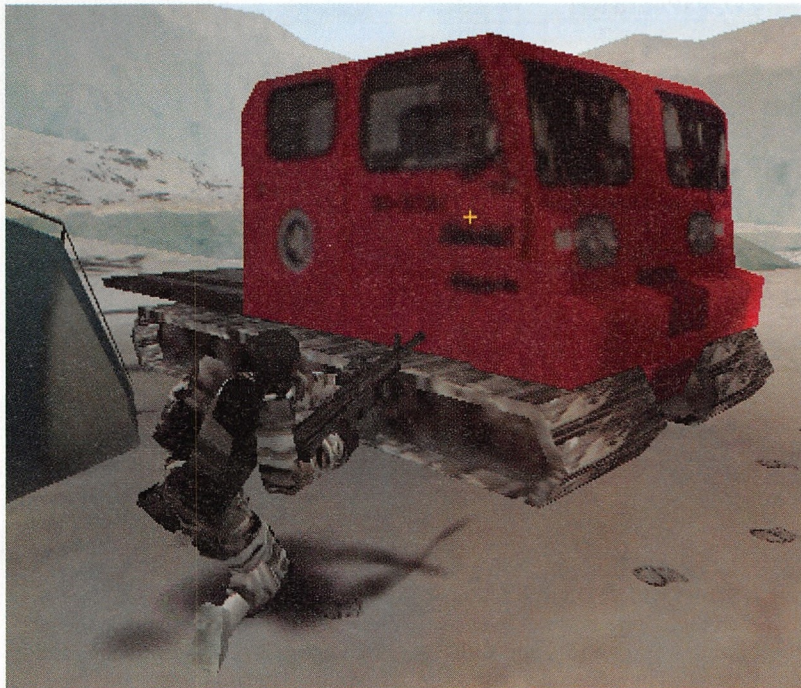
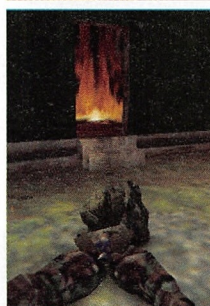
Light preparation

As with Ranger Assault, you control a squad of Green Berets in missions that occur around the globe in a variety of environments. Locations include Germany, Antarctica, Korea, Pakistan and Thailand, and each campaign offers up to six missions. Operations can be undertaken in any order, and all are preceded by a basic mission briefing that falls far short of the quality offered in similar titles. The lack of a planning map is particularly frustrating, taking the emphasis away from team tactics and placing Spec Ops 2 squarely in the realm of FPS. The squad control feature, in which you can issue one of three commands to your teammates, simply doesn't compensate for such an oversight.

On the upside, the training package is very good and the mission preparation phase is logical and straightforward. Having taken the key points of the mission briefing on board, your next step is to configure your squad. Skill levels can be set for each team member, with basic categories including Foot Soldier, Grenadier, Machine Gunner, Sniper, Close-Quarters and Demolition. Once the squad is assembled, weapon and equipment load outs can be tailored to suit your requirements. A fantastic array of weapon types is available to choose from, with more to be found within the mission area. Interestingly, you also have the ability to swap items between members of your squad during a mission.

Not the brightest

Spec Ops 2 plays well, although some minor annoyances detract from the experience. The lack of an active map makes navigation a slow and laborious process, despite the overhead



Inspecting the Green Beret's Top Secret Reconnaissance Tractor.



PLUS

www.bragg.army.mil
Visit Fort Bragg, the home of US Airborne forces. The site has everything you need to know about the 'death from above' boys, including unit histories, a picture gallery and the Fort Bragg telephone directory.

Welcome To Fort Bragg

Happy Holidays

In Honor of Airborne Troopers whose Courage, Dedication, and Tradition Make Them the World's Finest Fighting Soldier

view, and the AI 'buddies' are not the brightest Green Berets around. They make excellent targets for the enemy in most missions, and the individual specialisations don't seem to have much impact on the game. The friendly AI was criticised in the original version, and it's

enemy teams, rather than a phased operation against a co-ordinated force.

Given the standard of the competition, Spec Ops 2 looks a little dated. In essence, this is a competent FPS that includes a half-hearted attempt at team based tactics. It's easy

"INTERESTINGLY, YOU ALSO HAVE THE ABILITY TO SWAP ITEMS..."

surprising that the same mistake has been made again. Similarly, the enemy AI isn't particularly well-handled, with most missions resulting in a number of small engagements against dispersed

to learn, looks and sounds OK, and some of the external environments are really quite impressive. An average title without much to lift it above the pack.

Major Des McNicholas

PCPP

FOR: Good tutorial and a fast learning curve. Looks good, and it comes with a great range of weapon and equipment types.

AGAINST: Below par team control, no planning phase and no map. An overhead view that's virtually useless in the dark! AI could use some more tweaking.

60

NHL Championship 2000

●Genre: NHL Sim ●Players: 1-10 ●Developer: Radical Entertainment ●Publisher: Activision ●Distributor: Activision ●Price: \$69.95 ●Rating: G ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P166, 32MB RAM, 80MB HD ●Want: P233, 64MB RAM ●URL: www.radical.ca/fox_hockey/

The latest in Fox Sports' range is surprisingly good.



"Hey, Heinrich, this is for World War III!"

Games with "FOX Sports" logos on them have never exactly set the gaming world on fire, and with good reason. They generally have placed far too much emphasis on making the game a complete FOX Sports package, with realistic camera angles, cool replays and excellent commentary. The problem is, they usually end up forgetting about making the game actually fun to play. It's painful to play these games at times because you can tell there's a great title inside just dying to get out, if only the developers took the time to get it right.

It's alright!

Finally, with NHL Championship 2000 they've got it right (or close enough anyway). While it's not quite as polished as its main rival, NHL 2000 from EA Sports, it's more of a sim that

of the latest 3D card. The graphics are very standard, but they still do the job. Each player is easily identifiable, and from the standard camera angle the arenas and characters look quite nice. However, during close-ups (like when a fight breaks out) you'll notice that the players look a little strange and their limbs don't quite look human. Although some people would argue that NHL players aren't human to begin with...

There are some nice graphical touches in the game though, such as the trail that the puck leaves when you do a particularly hard shot for goal. It does seem a little out of place in a game that's selling itself as a hardcore sim, but it still looks pretty nonetheless. Another slightly weird aspect to the graphics is that when you body-check someone, they ricochet away from the impact in a very exaggerated fashion,

"...BODYCHECKING YOUR OPPONENTS THROUGH THE GLASS IS EASY..."

should please die-hard NHL fans, especially those who think that NHL 2000 is more of an arcade game.

Being an officially licensed NHL title, you instantly get every NHL franchise to choose from, including the latest expansion team, the Atlanta Thrashers. There are also 18 international teams to choose from and you can play off in a world tournament mode using these teams.

In terms of visuals, NHL Championship 2000 won't be being used as a demo to show off the power

almost comical. This makes them look like they should be in "NHL Jam".

True sim

While NHL Championship 2000 is a sim at heart, it's quite easy to pick up and play, even if you don't know the rules of ice hockey (there's an

option to turn off all the rules if you just want a bash-fest). Performing slap-shots, bouncing passes off the walls and, most importantly, body-checking your opponents through the glass is easy to accomplish. One very helpful feature is the fact that each character has pass indicators around him when he has the puck, letting you know where your teammates are. Very helpful for teammates who are usually just off-screen.

When it comes to NHL games in the year 2000, there are only two options - NHL 2000 or NHL Championship 2000. Both provide fast-paced, intense ice hockey action, but if you want more of a true sim then NHL Championship 2000 is the game for you. Just don't expect the polish of NHL 2000, or you could be very disappointed.

Ewan Corness

PLUS
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PCPP

FOR: Great for the hardcore NHL fans.

AGAINST: How many hardcore NHL fans are there in Australia?

78

NBA Inside Drive 2000

●Genre: NBA Sim ●Players: 1-8 ●Developer: High Voltage Software ●Publisher: Microsoft ●Distributor: Microsoft ●Price: \$49.95 ●Rating: G ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P166, 2MB video card, 90MB HD space ●Want: P266, 4MB video card, 150MB HD space ●URL: <http://www.microsoft.com/sports/insidedrive2000>

Thorough and realistic, this one is for the true basketball connoisseur.

Microsoft knows games. Except for sports ones. Especially basketball games. That's what you'd think from their first effort at a basketball sim, NBA Full Court Press. Shocking graphics that would have looked at home on a SNES and appalling gameplay that made the NBA seem more like the NBL (shudder) helped Full Court Press hit the bargain bins quicker than Luc Longley hits the floor after tripping over his size 18 feet.

Thankfully Microsoft looked at Full Court Press, realised that Full Court Press 2 (with improved graphics!) would suck, and instead spent a few years creating the exacting NBA sim, NBA Inside Drive 2000. The game couldn't be more different to FCP - which is great news for NBA fans.

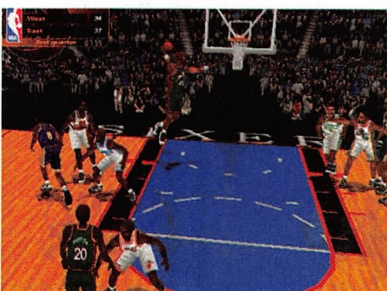
Awesome commentary

Actually, Microsoft did keep one aspect of FCP in Inside Drive - the sound, or more importantly, the commentary. Using the Seattle Supersonics courtside team of Kevin Calabro and Marques Johnson instantly gives Inside Drive the #1 spot in NBA commentary. Calabro and Johnson bounce comments off each other in a very realistic, and sometimes even witty, style. Of course after a while they begin to repeat themselves, but you always get this in sporting games.

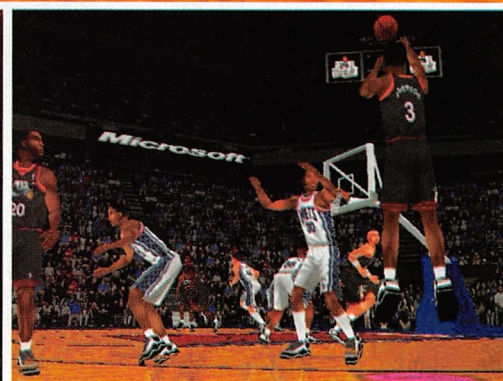
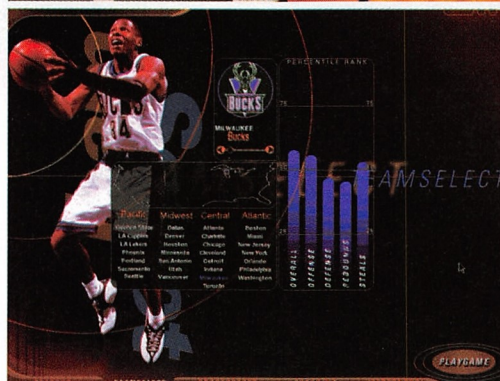
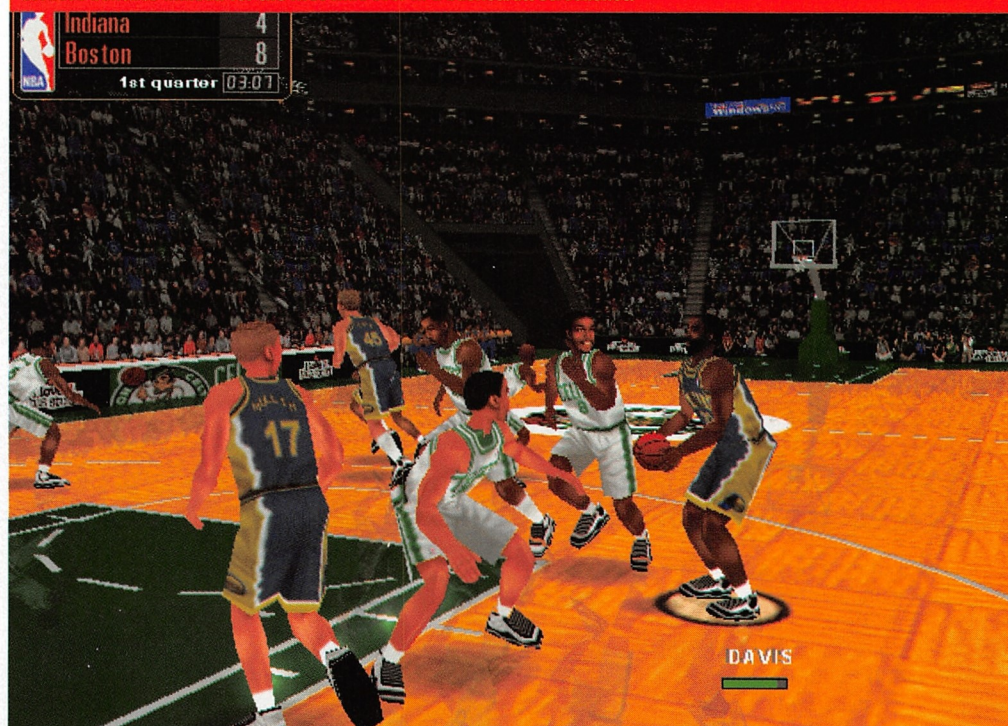
While Inside Drive has awesome commentary, where the game really shines is in the gameplay. High Voltage Software have really emphasised the simulation side of the NBA, so you'll find no flaming balls, no somersault dunks and no "big head mode". Instead you'll really need to read up on your NBA playbook because the AI is that hard. Being a hardcore NBA freak is a definite advantage. In fact, Inside Drive is even more "simmy" than NBA Live 2000, which is a pretty big deal if you are one of those NBA freaks looking for a true sim.

He got game

Visually Inside Drive isn't really anything special. The players all look



Corness benches himself for the first time ever in a basketball screenshot.



PLUS
www.onhoops.com
 For an irrelevant look at the NBA through the eyes of a couple of cynical fans. Check out the Chump Register for a list of the worst players in the league.



realistic enough, it's not that they look poor (poor as in visually, not monetarily), they just don't look as good as their NBA Live counterparts. Motion capture duties for Inside Drive were performed by Ray Allen of the Milwaukee Bucks (who also

the little guy moves. That would have been tragic.

Inside Drive did manage to knock NBA Live off its perch as the #1 NBA sim on the market, but unfortunately the rest of the package doesn't have the

"...AT LEAST THEY DIDN'T USE A BIG GUY TO DO THE LITTLE GUY MOVES."

starred in the movie "He Got Game"), and his skills help the game look very authentic. The only gripe here is that his moves don't really suit the big guys, but at least they didn't use a big guy to do

polish to make it the overall better game. NBA freaky-boys will love the authentic (read: tough) AI, but casual basketball fans could find it a tad frustrating.

Ewan Corness

PCPP

FOR: CPU plays a great, hard, realistic game.

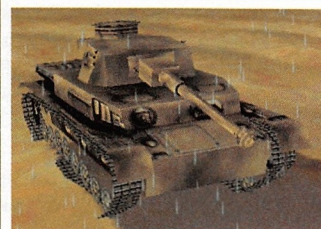
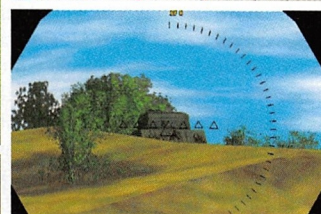
AGAINST: Maybe a little TOO hard...

68

Panzer Elite

●Genre: Historical Tactical Tank Sim ●Players: 1-6 ●Developer: Wings Simulations ●Publisher: Psygnosis ●Distributor: GT Interactive ●Price: \$89.95 ●Rating: M15 ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P233, 64MB RAM, 3D Video Card (D3D) ●Want: PII 450, 128 MB RAM, 740MB HD ●URL: www.panzerelite.com

Explosive action with this beautiful but flawed tank sim.



The wait for a first rate historical tank game has been a long one, but Psygnosis' Panzer Elite will go a long way towards satisfying both sim veterans and those novices with the patience to master a fairly complex interface. Despite some unfortunate flaws, Panzer Elite boasts a mix of gameplay and realism that sets a new standard for WWII tank sims.

Opportunity kills

Panzer Elite places you in command of either a US or German tank platoon during WWII, slogging it out in North Africa, Sicily and mainland Europe. 40 missions can be played from both sides in any order, or they can be strung together to form national campaigns. The campaigns offer some additional challenges, as you become responsible for ammo and fuel resupply, crew replacements and vehicle upgrades.

The missions in Panzer Elite are well-conceived, and a combination of excellent terrain modelling, quality sound and frenetic radio chatter all add to a truly immersive experience. After attending a comprehensive briefing, you take control of your platoon to play a small part in a much bigger picture. The need to conform to the actions of other units adds a lot to the challenge and atmosphere of the game, and prevents it from degenerating into a simple blast fest. If your orders tell you to link up with Zug Adler at the Gavray crossroads, then you'd better be there - no amount of opportunity kills or completed secondary objectives will save the scenario!

Panzer Elite strikes an excellent balance between platoon level tactical



Major Des goes fox-hunting on his country retreat.

PLUS

An oldie but a goodie, *Tanks of World War II* by Duncan Crow is a great introduction to the development and use of armour in that conflict. The main tank campaigns of the war are summarised, and the history and characteristics of all the key tanks are addressed in detail. Worth it for the photographs alone!

TANKS of World War II



considerations and the hands-on control of a single tank. As the platoon commander, you need to identify routes, select formations, and specify the rules of engagement. Wingman control is fairly straightforward, although an ability to plot and follow waypoints would improve this aspect of the game. Once the action hots up, you can jump into any of the crew stations or just let them get on with it while you look for good fire positions. The

results in an understandable degree of complexity. Unfortunately, Psygnosis haven't helped with a bewildering (and non-intuitive) range of keystrokes, a barely adequate manual and no tutorial missions. The keystroke problem may have been an unavoidable programming issue, but the manual and tutorial deficiencies just seem to be sloppy work. It's a shame, because the learning curve may turn some players away before

"...QUALITY SOUND AND FRENETIC RADIO CHATTER..."

gunnery mode and vehicle handling characteristics are probably the best available in a WWII sim, with the higher levels of realism posing a fantastic challenge.

Flawed gem

Be warned that you'll have to put the hours in to get the most out of this game, as the emphasis on realism

they get a chance to see what a great game this is.

Panzer Elite is a flawed gem, but a gem nonetheless. If you have the patience, then you're in for some late nights because this is the tank sim you've been waiting for. I'm not convinced that this is as good as it gets, but it must be close!

Major Des McNicholas

PCPP

FOR: Great atmosphere and remarkable attention to detail. An excellent balance between platoon and single tank operations.

AGAINST: No tutorial, poor manual and an overly complex interface. A bunch of little things, like no map contours, waypoints, or the ability to swap tanks.

85

12 o'Clock High - BOMBING THE REICH

●Genre: Strategic Wargame ●Players: 1-2 Hot Seat or Email only ●Developer: Talonsoft ●Publisher: Talonsoft ●Distributor: Jack of All Games ●Price: \$TBA ●Rating: G ●Available: Now
●Need: P233 MMX; 64MB RAM; 134MB HD ●Want: PII; 128 MB RAM ●URL: www.talonsoft.com

More a model than a game, prepare to be challenged with this ambitious strategy simulation.

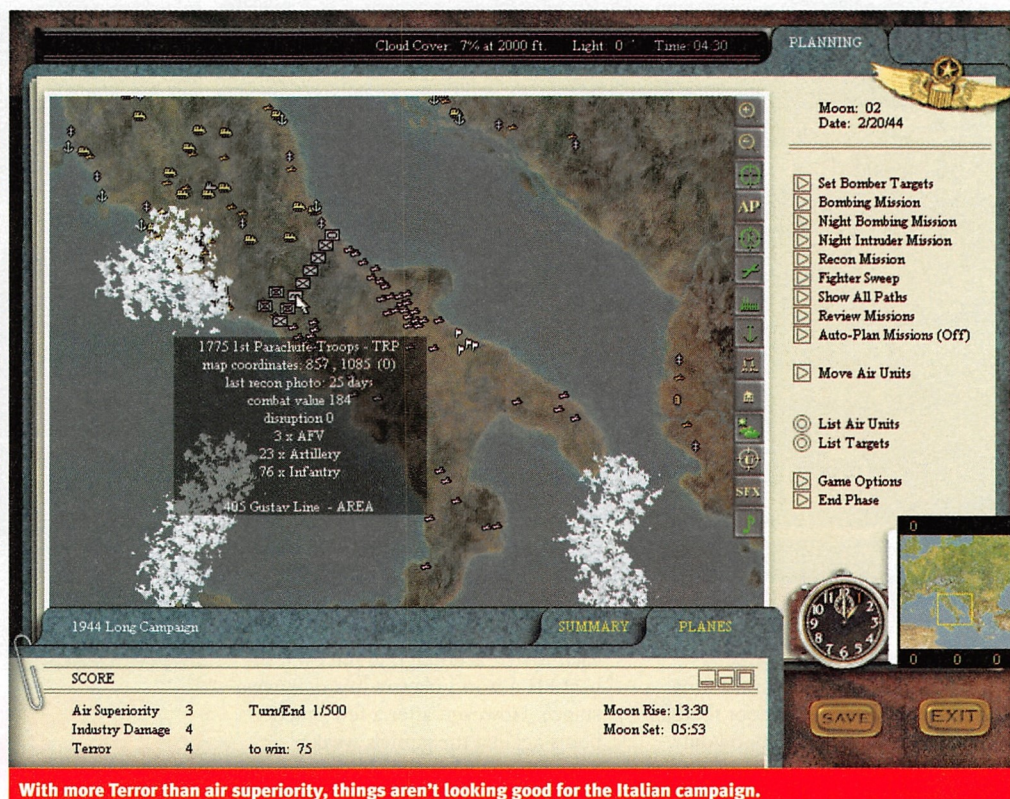


With the Battle of Britain over and won, and the tide turning against the Axis forces throughout the world, the time had come to take the war to Hitler in Europe. Despite the claims made in more recent conflicts, nothing has even come close to the scale of the strategic bombing campaigns of 1943-45. In 12 O'Clock High - Bombing the Reich, Talonsoft have produced a remarkably comprehensive war game that builds on the model introduced with their earlier release: Battle of Britain.

700 turns

Like its predecessor, 12 O'Clock High is not for the casual gamer. It's more a sophisticated model than a game, and the patience needed to master the intricate level of detail will reward those with a genuine interest in strategic operations. Ten strategic bombing and three ground support campaigns are available, including the option of fighting the entire air war over Europe in a 700-turn marathon session. Key indicators, such as industrial damage, air superiority and destroyed aircraft determine victory points.

As the commander of the Allied forces, your job is to select targets and allocate resources. A relatively simple interface hides an amazing amount of detail, as you determine force composition, ingress and exit points, TOT (Time over Target) and escort tactics. Realistically, political factors can drive your targeting policy, and you have the option of leaving all but the most crucial decisions to your staff. As the Axis commander, all you have to do is stop



With more Terror than air superiority, things aren't looking good for the Italian campaign.

them! In defence, your responsibilities include interception policy, the positioning of anti-aircraft defences, and combat doctrine.

As you would expect, the manual is no light read, with the Historical Overview qualifying as a novel in its own right! A tutorial is provided for the Allied side, although no similar introduction is offered for would-be Goerings. Given that the Axis side probably offers the most enjoyment

in the usual way that we judge excitement in computer gaming. The game phases are interesting and challenging, with an emphasis on intellectual horsepower. Once your plans are laid, it's a matter of sitting back and watching the 'action', which consists of lines and squares moving slowly across the screen. Game speed can be increased up to eight times but it's still mind numbingly slow! An instant computer resolution option

**"...WITH AN EMPHASIS ON
INTELLECTUAL HORSEPOWER."**

from a game perspective, an Axis tutorial might have broadened 12 O'Clock High's appeal to new players. One strong point of the manual is the use of 'purpose' statements after each section to provide clarification and act as defacto strategy guides.

A bit slow

Try as I might, I can't say that this is a very exiting game to play - at least not

would help, particularly for the non-critical support missions. Those with lower end machines will be doubly frustrated by the slow load times.

Settling on a final score was tricky, as 12 O'Clock High falls short in the gameplay stakes. How's this then? If you're a fan of complex strategic modelling (and who isn't!) then read the score upside down.

Major Des McNicholas

PLUS

If planes turn you on then don't go past *The Great Planes* by James Gilbert. It features fantastic air-to-air photography, spanning the history of flight. One of the biggest names in bombing, the B-17 Flying Fortress, is covered in detail.



PCPP

FOR: Probably the best simulation of strategic bombing that you are likely to see. Incredible level of detail and unmatched historical accuracy.

AGAINST: Limited tutorial, no auto-resolution feature and a lack of excitement.

68

Puma Street Soccer

●Genre: Arcade 3-a-side Soccer ●Players: 1-6 ●Developer: SunSoft + Pixelstorm ●Publisher: Infogrames ●Distributor: Ozisoft ●Price: \$TBA ●Rating: G ●Available: Now
 ●Need: P133, 16MB RAM, 95MB HDD, 4xCD, 3D Videocard (D3D, Glide) ●Want: P200 MMX, 32MB RAM, 370MB HDD, 16xCD

This review is proudly brought to you by ("Hang on, the sponsorship deal hasn't been signed yet!" - Ed)



That's what happens when you get a South American commentator.

The best way to describe Sunsoft's latest release, Puma Street Sport Soccer, is "indoor football with a twist". Each team sports only four players (three outfield men and the goalie), matches are played on a variety of courts from the local international airport terminal (a la that Brazilian football commercial) to the local fishing docks, and the pace of the game itself is lightning fast!

Accompanied by Korn's latest chart topper, the intro movie plays rather like a high energy Nike commercial, and with the Pringles sponsorship of the title and their loving logo placed in the goalmouth of every court, my only surprise was not to see a bunch of university students banging and tapping along to the music with empty Pringles cans. In line with this blatant dousing of commercialism, the game's main menu actually includes the option to view a Pringles television ad!

Supershots

Puma Street Soccer sports four modes of play. These include an exhibition match, world cup, a simple knockout competition, and an NSL on bitumen-style penalty shootout. In-game replays may be saved for posterity and there are literally tonnes of hidden secrets (star players, new courts, etc) to be unlocked. There are three levels of AI difficulty and the matches can be played at anything from three to ten minutes per half.

Actually playing the game is an experience in itself; the sheer pace of

each match is enough to put even the best FIFA 2000 players in a defensive stance. However, after a few practice bouts against the game's weaker opposition, ball control becomes more familiar, and the goals start to come thick and fast. Player control is easy to pick up, and once mastered is very much second nature. With all the basics like pass, shoot and lob, additional moves may be accomplished via the use of multiple buttons, and double tapping. As witnessed in many coin-op arcade soccer games, Puma Street Soccer includes a shot energy bar for each team that progressively fills as a shot on goal is attempted. Once the bar fills to maximum capacity, a feature called "Super-Shot" becomes available, allowing the team who earned it (when in possession) to make three blistering shots with increased speed and enhanced accuracy.

Ed Lost To Brazil

Blindly running about the pitch, passing to teammates and simply hammering the ball when close to the goal works reasonably well against the less renowned of the included footballing nations. But try to take on a team like Brazil with this type of strategy, and you'll soon find the goals against mounting up. In order to get the



"...TAKE ON BRAZIL, AND YOU'LL SOON FIND THE GOALS AGAINST MOUNTING UP."

most out of each team during a match, it becomes necessary to master the in-game strategies included. Prior to the start of each match, any human player has the option of choosing three strategies to use during the game. These include everything from "man marking" to "fast breaks", and it's only via the correct use of these tactics that the giants of street soccer may be overcome.

Match visuals are a treat to watch, as is the extremely fluid player animation, and the framerate is completely amazing. Along with cheering spectators waving their team flags at every match, each court offers unique eye candy and situational audio according to location, be it jet engines and moving planes at the airport to sirens and car horns in the animated city streets.

Puma Street Soccer, commercialism aside, is a good effort on many levels, however the overpowering arcade feel of the title means it will not be every virtual hooligan's cup of tea.

Edward Fox

PLUS

<http://streetsoccer.hypermart.net/>
 Learn how to create conditions conducive to experiencing a state of Magic whatever your sporting or artistic endeavour.



PCPP

FOR: Fun, fast paced action. Great visual and audio immersion

AGAINST: Extreme commercialism! Arcade title through-and-through

75

Phoenix

●Genre: Narrative Space Action Sim ●Players: 1 ●Developer: Team 17 ●Publisher: Microprose ●Distributor: Hasbro ●Price: \$89.95 ●Rating: G8+ ●Available: Now
 ●Need: PII 266, Win95/98, 350MB HDD, 64MB RAM, 3D Videocard ●Want: PII 300, 128MB RAM, Joystick ●URL: www.team17.com/phoenix

Some exciting dogfighting just isn't enough to bring this hackneyed space sim back from the dead.



Huh, what's this? Crop circles in space!

It doesn't matter what game you make these days, it has to have an epic storyline to flesh out the other elements. We at PowerPlay are at least partly to blame (*Surely you mean "thank"?* - Ed) for this alarming trend, with our constant rabbling on about "Where's the story?" One of the problems facing a developer looking to add a narrative to

weaponry to take in your payload. So there's all the makings of a good combat sim: lots of variety in missions, weapons and craft. The control of your craft takes the standard form of the space sim, much like X-Wing Alliance in fact. A joystick is definitely recommended, since using mouse and keyboard is

"...THE USUAL ROUND OF DOGFIGHTS AND ASSUALTS IN THREE DIMENSIONS"

what is otherwise a straightforward shooting-fest is how do you make it seem realistic? One of the possible ways is to write a good story. If this is too difficult, another good way is to punctuate your average story with lots of swearing. Hell, it worked for "This Life" and "NYPD Blue". So strap on your spacesuit, goddammit! It's time to blow up some smugglers' ships, for chrissakes! Stop playing that other shit and take a look at Phoenix, the slimy sonuva....

In space no one...

Phoenix is a combat space sim set in the current century. Um, let me think about that... You fly various missions and, based on your performance, you either continue onto more challenging levels or take an easier route. This obviously affects the storyline. All of this culminates in four possible endings based on choices you've made and your skill level.

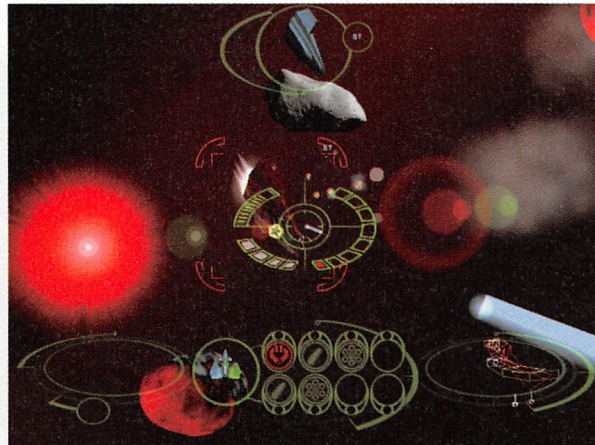
There is a good range of craft to choose from, as well as a selection of

not an option.

With varied requirements of engagement and lots of mid-mission directives, the action is nicely paced and varied. Controls are generally very good and the HUD is easy to understand. It's the usual round of dogfights and assaults in three dimensions. The gameplay is exciting and strong enough to sustain interest, but it's nothing groundbreaking - we've seen it before. So what's left to distinguish this title? Perhaps the story...

... can hear you yawn

The storyline concerns a web of intrigue - golly! You are Beck, a police officer in space. Your partner Phoenix is shot down while on patrol with you, in suspicious circumstances. You seem to



Some romantic intrigue: time to pull out the box of tissues.

be having an affair with his widow, Sarah. Even the dullest of readers can smell our friend Phoenix returning (perhaps for some revenge?). To add insult, much of the voice acting stinks in Phoenix - but at least it does so in a refreshingly European accent, as a change from American bad voice acting. The voice of Beck, though, is passable for the most part, which is the game's saving grace since many of the other voices are dreadful. In contrast, the interesting and varied music is exceptional.

The fact that the character of the game is unsuccessful has a lot to do with the awkward menus and FMV sections, since in the thick of battle the game works well. The action in Phoenix is good but it doesn't offer anything new to the genre. Phoenix is an action game that will interest space sim fans, but is hardly a must-have for your average gamer.

John Dewhurst

PLUS

phoenix.areaguides.net
 So you wanted to visit Arizona, did you? Well, here's all the tourist info for the golf capital of the world!



PCPP

FOR: Playable action title with good options in missions and weapons.

AGAINST: Boring and predictable story, standard genre title, nothing new!

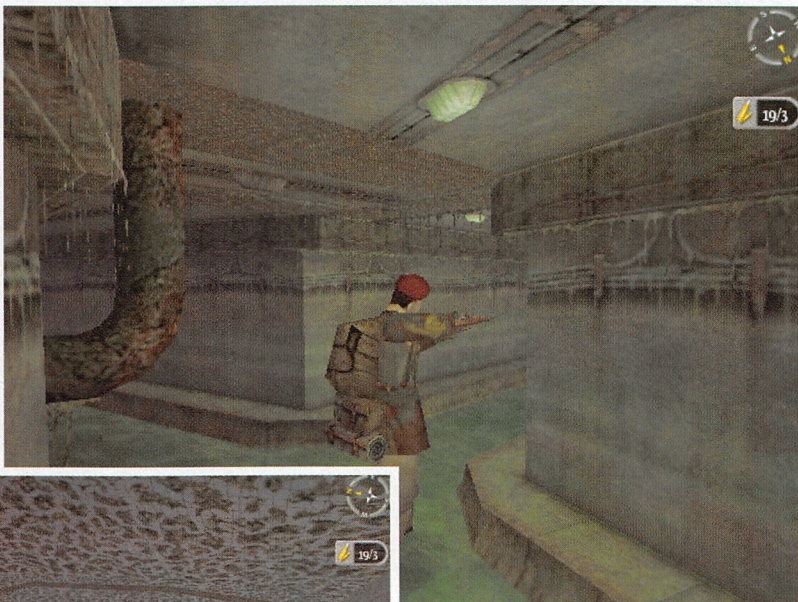
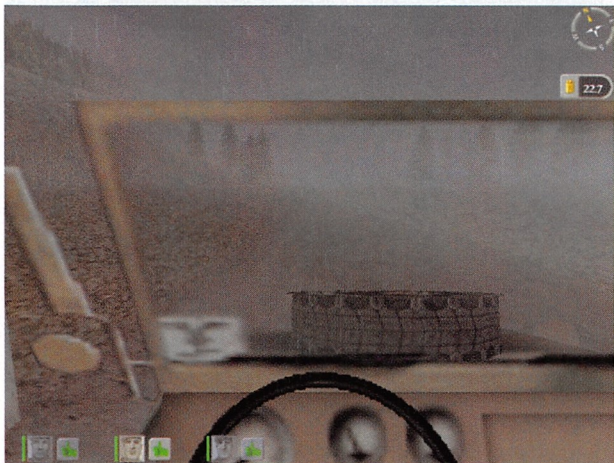
64

Hidden & Dangerous -

FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

●Genre: Firstperson War Simulation ●Players: 1-4 ●Developer: Illusion Softworks ●Publisher: Talonsoft ●Distributor: Jack of all Games ●Price: \$39.95 ●Rating: M15+ ●Available: Now
 ●Need: a copy of H&D (match), P233, 32MB RAM, 3D graphics card, 35MB HD ●Want: 64MB RAM, 132MB HD (full install) ●URL: www.illusionsoftworks.com/hd.htm

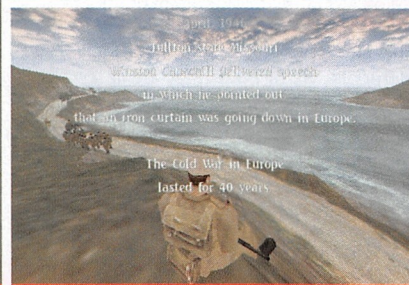
Hidden & Dangerous is considered a flawed masterpiece. This then, can be considered as simply flawed.



It's hard to describe how frustrating a poor piece of software is - well actually no, it isn't. What is difficult is trying to fathom why such things exist. The original Hidden & Dangerous, in my humble opinion, was a slightly flawed masterpiece. It had the style and mood, it had the squad-based controls, it had complex missions requiring in-depth planning. Sadly, what it also had was haphazard soldier AI, impossibly difficult enemy AI and the ability to die in the most extraordinary and inexplicable ways. All patched up, H&D was greatly improved - no more dropping of weapons for no apparent reason, no more deaths by lying down.



Whether it's bugs or John's piloting skill, this game is sure to crash.



A lovely spot for a war.

"...THE EVER-LOOMING CHANCE OF THE DARN THING CRASHING."

Really buggy

So I find myself thinking, "It's tough being a games developer - give them a break. They've done alright." I begin to whistle at the prospect of an expansion pack for H&D. Surely, this time around we'll see none of the shenanigans that plagued the original. But no, I'm wrong - out of the box, Fight for Freedom is REALLY buggy.

Firstly there's the abominable loading times. The maps aren't huge, but I'm sure I spent more time waiting for them to load than I did playing them. Secondly, there's the scrambling of controls. This addon uses a different control setup to the original game, meaning readjustments must be made. But even after this has been accomplished, there is the unbelievable

situation of not being able to change your pose. Remember the W and S keys? You could stand, kneel and lie with them. It's particularly laughable that the only way I could get my men to do this was to go the map screen and give them the order to do it there (which involved waiting for the map screen to load). There is also the unpredictable but ever-looming chance of the darn thing crashing. Put plainly, Fight for Freedom is a bigger mess than the original.

Virtually unplayable

Before I'd even had a chance to play through the new levels, I was bombarded by the flaws and absurdities of the enigma that is Fight for Freedom. The game as it comes, is virtually unplayable. If an enthusiastic fan finds it

hard, why would any gamer who is giving it a chance bother with it? But hey, maybe a patch will be out in the next month or two and I'll be able to review the game rather than Illusion Softworks' bad programming. The sad thing is, these problems aside Fight for Freedom seems to have some worthwhile new missions for H&D fans.

It just kills me to think that ANY developer would produce a game that requires a patch before you can play what you've already paid for? Then release an addon that suffers from the same problem? Ridiculous! The stupid tactic of releasing titles unfinished in order to cash in is amongst the worst the games industry has to offer. Fight for Freedom is just one more example of this disappointing trend.

John Dewhurst



PCPP

FOR: More H&D missions, version 1.3 of the game, expect a patch real soon!

AGAINST: Long loading times, periodic crashing, crippled controls all make this almost unplayable.

45

traitors gate

DO YOU ACCEPT THE MISSION?

\$79⁹⁵

A realistic game where you, as a Pentagon officer, have been assigned the task of retrieving the British Crown Jewels from the Tower of London before the real thieves get them and without the Tower security catching you!



MISSION EXPERIENCE

Traitors Gate is a mission firmly rooted in realism, where the location, target and challenge are all drawn from the actual Tower of London. Without being seen or heard and leaving no trace, you, agent Raven, must remove the British Crown Jewels. To succeed you must out-fox both the security personnel and the multi-million pound surveillance system protecting the jewels.



DEPT	AGENT NO	AGENT CODE NAME	LOCATION	PICTURES
PIAD	031-1	RAVEN	TOWER OF LONDON	

MISSION:

traitors gate

4 CD ROM SET WIN/MAC

Harvey Norman

THE GAMING SPECIALISTS

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Baldur's Gate

If you thought that Days of Our Lives could do sibling rivalry ... you should check out how it works in the Forgotten Realms!



The Baldur's Gate intro features a very large, very mean, very spiky guy, doing very nasty things to a goodly knight. Pre-killing banter implies that a slot has opened on the killer's to-do list and that your character seems to be next in line.

Things go from bad to worse when he does actually appear in the game, taking out your mentor like he was an affiliate member of the Pointy Hat Club and not a mage of greater power than you're ever likely to attain. Due to your valorous foot speed, you manage to survive.

Magical gizmos

Right there, you have the set up for a great computerised role-playing game. You have a hand-made character who has to be able to stand up to tall, dark and spiky guy by the end of the game. How you forge your way to this end is up to you.

Baldur's Gate is such a great RPG because there are plenty of magical gizmos, weapons and spells, from artifacts to Rings of Wizardry to Animate Dead all to help slowly build your merry band into a powerful and unique arse-whooping posse. The years of play testing of the Advanced D&D

have all of the above and switch every battle, but that means the best items only get used half of the time. Then there are tactics to worry about. Do you charge in to tie up the enemies in hand-to-hand or just lob fireballs willy-nilly?

Personally, my bard had an itchy trigger finger and a Wand of Fireballs, while my friend had a dwarven fighter/cleric and a serious addiction to charging. Often we both gave in to our impulses, resulting in the unpleasant aroma of singed dwarf. Handing over the Ring of Fire Resistance only made him more nervous.

For us the real challenge was not having a mage. Being that bards are really a wishy-washy class that only specialises in identifying magic items, my character couldn't double as a front line fighter or a thief, meaning she copped mage duty. Most groups go fighter or mage heavy, I think we went archer heavy. This was our (poor) choice and we stand by it. Some battles that would have cut most parties in half were a piece of cake for us, while others were a nightmare. Like the wolfweres in the expansion pack, who run in like they're on steroids, with the sole

"DO YOU CHARGE IN OR JUST LOB FIREBALLS WILLY NILLY?"



Your quest is to remove those glowing circles from around your feet.

material means the items are interesting, useful and anticipated. This variety of options mean you never have to tackle the same encounter, let alone game, the same way twice.

Just to consider the group fighter, do you pile on the Braces of Archery and the Bow of Marksmanship or do you go for the huge two handed sword, Gauntlets of Weapon Use, heavy armour and Boots of Speed? You can

purpose to pull the bows off archers, arms still attached.

Bad-arse-itude

This variety and flexibility, as well as the backstory and wealth of AD&D, made Baldur's Gate a great RPG; what made it a great game, in general, was the great supporting cast of elements.

The 10,000 individually drawn and pre-rendered game screens made each



THE HUMOUR OF THE GATE

Sure, this game is no Sam & Max but the team at Bioware have made sure that they have slipped their fair share of humour to break up their often dark and grim take on the Forgotten Realms.

I had to redo the fight because of it, when I caught the bard Garrick break into the "Bold Sir Robin Did Boldly Run Away" song from Monty Python the first time his morale broke.

There's a "Gonzo" cheat that summons a band of

giant, flesh-eating chickens to attack your enemies, which rocks. If killer chickens isn't your style, we have a Miniature Giant Space Hamster named Boo. I suspect we haven't heard the last from that rodent.

Not all of the humour is just absurd: there is the High Priest of Lothander who declares, "Don't touch me, I'm frightfully important" as soon as you approach him. Then there's the special "guided tour" of the

first level of Durlag's Tower (in Tales of the Sword Coast) complete with annoying (American?) tourists.

Even the genre, which they generally stick to flawlessly, comes in for some gentle ribbing. As I suspect that any Innkeeper who actually said, "My bar's as clean as an elf's [sic] arse," anywhere in the Realms would end up as Underwear of Drow Wedgiving to find out first hand in no time.



The Gnoll's Stronghold is a real hole.



new area something to see. The palaces are spectacular and once you delve into Durlag's Tower (even the fact that every level makes you relive scenes from the Blair Witch Project: "We're going to die out here! (sob) I'm sorry Mom ...") you are drawn deeper not so much by desire for booty, or experience, but just to marvel at the next cool level.

Talking about the Tower, the design of the side quests, especially in the expansion material, is excellent. Durlag's creation, in particular, provides some choice delving. Devious traps, new monsters, great interior design (if you are into the brooding-dungeon thing) and a dash of puzzle solving are all wrapped in a suitable tale of tragedy and woe.

Although the dungeon design is great, it doesn't mean much without

decent characters, which, luckily, there are. The two dozen or so NPCs from which your party is drawn, each with his or her own history, voice, quirks and personality make them more than just walking sets of abilities. Often players found their groups were based more on the character's personality, than bad-arse-itude.

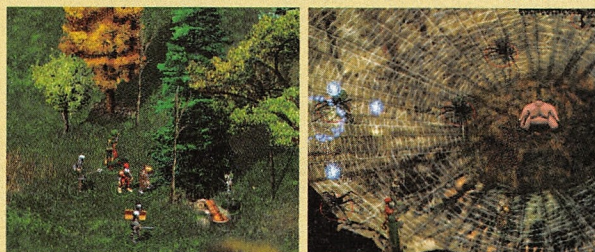
Just enough detail was provided to start players filling in the blanks. Seeing our paladin, Ajantis, striding forward into the depths of Durlag's deathtrap, in his shiny paladin armour and gripping his flaming sword, conjured vivid imagery that certainly wasn't bound to the 2D isometric view.

Even the sparse character comments helped. Now and then you'd get a "You are a fine warrior" or "Your courage shames the others", and from the mutual admiration society I heard in action. I'd be very surprised if Branwen and Kivan didn't buy a nice suburban block and start raising Ranger/Clerics after things settled down.

Artistic

If you missed this game the first time around, you should take a look at the game that put AD&D back onto people's hard drives, and now that Baldur's Gate and Tales of the Sword Coast are now being sold together you really have no excuse. A year on and the artistic backgrounds are just as lovely, the dungeons are just as deep, the characters are just as interesting and the graphics still fire the imagination. I hear it can be done with one character... I'm planning to find out.

Timothy C. Best



We love the smell of singed dwarf in the morning.

REVIEWED: Issue 35

SCORED: 87%

WHAT WE SAID THEN: "One of the game's great strengths is that there is always something for you to do, always some pressing matter at hand that requires your attention. It's also just a hell of a lot of fun just wandering the countryside, meeting new people, scalping some bandits, and exploring this wonderful land."



HOYLE COLLECTION

● Genre: Time-wasters ● Players: 1-2 ● Developer: Hoyle ● Publisher: Sierra



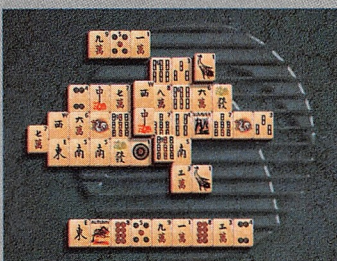
Once again, Hoyle is back with a range of games for the home PC, this time with a variety of casino and traditional games. You may remember a few issues back Hoyle released Hoyle Casino. This is more of the same, with some interesting variations. Each set contains at least two games to keep you occupied while you should be working. Blackjack comes with Craps and Pai Gow Poker, Slots comes with video poker and horse racing, and Solitaire is paired with Mahjong.

The Slots also has video slots with some very odd variations, one of which displays road kill on a Mac truck's tyre's - if you match 6 raccoons win 25000. With the

gambling games, as always, you have a starting balance of \$5000 (I know, I wish it was real too), and betting starts at a dollar through to the thousands. The blackjack and slots are the same format as found in Hoyle casino, so if you only wanted a few of the attractions, these breakups are a good investment.

There are 30 variations on theme of Mahjong to keep you interested, although Solitaire is a bit of a let down (there is no option to double-click the cards). Blackjack will keep you going with money to burn, and as always with Hoyle the tutorials will teach you everything you need to know.

Agata Budinska



The old "I wish this money was real" joke cracks us up every time.



Tonka Joe's nightclub was shut down as a result of the undesirables it attracted.

TONKA CONSTRUCTION 2

● Genre: Construction Sim ● Players: 1 ● Developer: Imagine Engine ● Publisher: Hasbro Interactive

Tonka Joe is back, with the next installment of the Tonka truck series - Tonka Construction 2. In previous instalments Tonka helped kids to create their own cars and trucks, building them from scratch, testing them for safety, and also to race them around. In this instalment, they take Tonka trucks to the test, by putting them out in the field to excavate, build and even to search for treasure.

Choose from the town, where a variety of projects await you, from re-furnishing play parks to the mountains, where you can make ski trails or build ski lodges. Go out west to clear a path and build

a road complete with road side diners and other attractions. You can even go and bulldoze for treasure. The construction activities start with demolition, then excavation, cementing and laying down the frames. Next you can add walls, windows, doors, roofs, greenery and other accessories, even statues. Once you're done, call the mayor for the celebration party for your new development, or call the skiers down to test out your new trails.

Each activity is guided by Tonka Joe and his various friends. They guide and encourage you to get the job done, making it an absolute winner for the younger ones.

Agata Budinska

LEGO FRIENDS

● Genre: Software For Girls ● Players: 1 ● Developer: Lego Media ● Publisher: Hasbro Interactive



► It's time to brush up on your music skills with this new effort from Lego. In this Software For Girls title, you're a member of a pop band, Tuff Stuff, who have to get ready for the big gig in Sunnyvale High's auditorium. Along with friends Anita, Mimi, Joolz and Emma you can write songs, make up dance routines, decorate the stage, rehearse and hang out in Tina's café with the boys.

This is a cartoon adventure from Lego that also helps kids to be as creative as possible (a long-standing motto of the company). A very user-friendly layout of lines and tiles are available for both music and dance creation, with an instant playback option to know what you're adding and where.

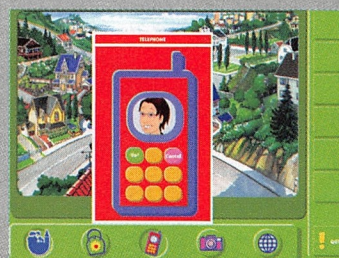
Use your mobile to find out what's happening around town, from problems with the stage set up, to milkshakes for Emma's

birthday. There's also a scrapbook for secret girls business that you can add your own thoughts to, as well as take pictures from the game.

There are many cutscenes that propel users to each different area. You can start in the bedroom with a sleep over, or go to the café to make posters for the gig. Rehearse in Anita's basement and discover a talent scout will be at the big gig.

Definitely one for the girls, it's actually an entertaining and interactive piece of software that doesn't bore quickly. If you like the Barbie games, you'll love this.

Agata Budinska



Er, for the kids.



LEGO ROCK RAIDERS

● Genre: Strategy ● Players: 1 ● Developer: Lego Media ● Publisher: Hasbro Interactive

► Lego have come out with a lot of releases in recent time, all of which are designed to appeal to all ages. This new title is a strategy game, similar to Starcraft, but for a much younger audience. Set in the future, you're in command of a group of miners called Rock Raiders. You are teleported to different caves to mine energy crystals and ore. Once teleported, you need to build a headquarters, support system, mining machines, and scout crafts. The Rock Raiders are like SCVs; they mine the crystals and ore, then bring them back to base, and of course to build the various stations, you need both. You also

need crystals to power the support station, so as not to run out of air.

There aren't many monsters to fight, and if you do come across any, a couple of shots from your pusher beam will scare them away. The controls are very easy to follow, although if you have too many Rock Raiders in the cave, you may find it hard to control their tasks. There are various upgrades for Raiders, tools and structures to make it easier to break your way through the various maps.

With many tasks and a complete set of training missions to complete, you'll be blasting away in no time.

Agata Budinska



This is surprisingly more entertaining than some fullprice RTS clones we've seen.

GAMEPLAY

HEADLINES: Rollercoaster Tycoon Playguide • Wheel of Time Playguide • Quake 3 Tips • Pharaoh Tips • Unreal Tournament Cheats • Half-Life Tips • Madden 2000 Cheats • Rogue Spear Cheats

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CODE

Half-Life: Opposing Force

Using a text editor, add -dev -console -game gearbox to the hl.exe command. E.g. hl.exe -dev -console -game gearbox. Once in the game, you can enter the following into the console to activate the respective cheats:

/IMPULSE 101 - all weapons and ammo
/GOD - God mode
/NOCLIP - walk through walls or fly
/MAP x - go to map x (type in map number)
/GIVE x - give item x (type in item name)

FIFA 2000

Type these codes during game to activate the following cheats:

MOMONEY - unlimited funds
HOOLIGAN - bonus teams
BURNABY - EAC pitch
SIZZLE - Lightning mode
DIZZY - Alien mode
LIGHTSOUT - Glow mode

Drakan

To enter God mode: while playing the game, type **\iamgod**. If successful, you will see the message "The Gods Have Looked Favorably On You." To exit God mode, repeat the process. If successful, you will see the message "The Gods Have Lost Favor In You." ▶



The Riddle of Master Lu

Q I'm stuck in The Riddle of Master Lu. I can't get past the very first place you go to in Beijing. I can't find or do anything else without getting arrested!

Thanks a lot,

Roman Rohwedder, Email

A Those dedicated souls that created The Riddle of Master Lu had enough foresight to include a walkthrough for the first part of the game - in the off chance that those attempting this grand adventure hadn't the wit to clear the first area. Having followed this to the letter, there are a few other terms that may help your perplexed state. Use the mallet on the gong for attention in the Hall of Classics. Try talking to Mei Chen, and don't forget about

oddties. A visit to the Posh Express is then in order.

System Shock 2

Q I am having trouble with System Shock 2 and would appreciate your infinite wisdom. I have made it to the Rickenbacker and am searching for the 15 eggs. I have been through all three decks and cannot find the last one.

Please help me o wise and noble one.

Michael McKean Dalby, QLD

A There are actually 16 eggs to be found.

*There's a room with a crane in the area where you first boarded the Rickenbacker. Two eggs can be found here.

*There are 2 eggs in Nacelle A. Another egg can be found at the end of the

READER'S TIP

tips&tactics

HALF-LIFE: GRUNT-O-MATIC

There is an excellent cheat called the Grunt-o-Matic. It lets you spawn soldiers (grunts) on any map. To use it, activate the cheat mode; without the quotes type 'developer 1' (not necessary if you've got -dev in the Command or Target line) and 'sv_cheats 1' at the console. Then type 'mp_allowmonsters 1' and 'impulse 76'. You will get the message "You must restart to use the Grunt-o-matic", so quick save/load or use the 'map xxxx' command. Once done, typing 'impulse 76' (binding it to a key is a good idea) will spawn a grunt in front of you. Done right, it's a great way to get past Barnacles and soften up large monsters like the Gargantuas.

Matthew "Seven^3" Vincent.



Half-Life: a neat way to create a diversion.

hallway that also houses a camera and gun turret.

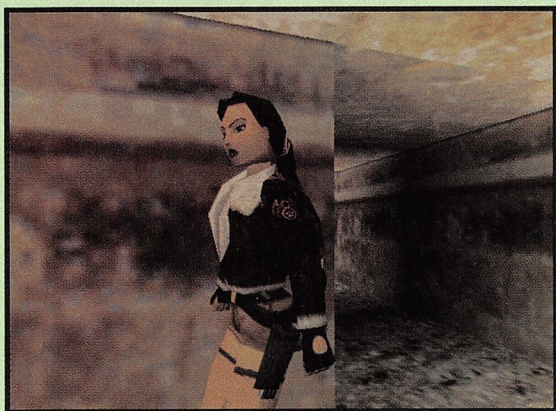
*Heading towards Nacelle B you come across a ladder. Head to the middle floor for an egg. You will also find two eggs at the entrance to Nacelle B. Another can be found inside Nacelle B.

*An egg can be found

near Elevator A.

*You will find three eggs in the Fuel Cells area. Another egg can be found by following the arrows to Pod 2, just as you climb the ladder to exit the area.

*Continuing on to Pod 2, you will find an egg on the wall. The final egg can be found in Missile Bay nearby.



Tomb Raider 2

Q I have a problem with Tomb Raider 2. At Lara's home I found a garden maze near the fountain that looks like a fish. I went through the maze until I found a place with two Indian-like statues standing in front of a platform with a switch in between them. I pressed the switch and a cut scene showed that a door had opened in the house. What do I do next?

Also, in the last level - what do I do with the Dagger of Xian?

Please help me!

Nick Avdimiotis
Oakleigh, VIC

A How prudent of you. Exploration does often yield some fantastic surprises. In this particular case, you'll find nothing that shall help you once Lara's begins her quest for the Dagger of Xian. You do, however, have the satisfaction that comes with knowing you've been a most thorough adventurer. Once you've activated the switch, a secret door to the treasure vault opens (you're not *seriously* asking for directions are you?). Once inside, you shall find...

As for the Dagger of Xian - use your limited imagination. Once you've wrested the Dagger from the belly of the Dragon, do what any self-respecting adventurer would do when an underground lair has just begun to self-destruct. RUN LIKE ALL BUGGERS OUT OF THERE! What else did you expect?

Nightlong

Q I have found my way to the cyberspace park and I have collected the cloth, the hammer, the silver coin, the match, the doll and saltpeter. I assume the next part of this level will be to get into the castle via the cable car - but nothing works. I have tried every combination of the things I have collected on each other and everything I can find at the various parts of this level - nada! I need help.

Having just reached my 64th year I would like to get past this level before reaching my 65th!

John Mitchell
Riverton, WA

A Ahhh... Spend another few years (to the power of infinity) solving games like this and I might find use in you as an apprentice. Perhaps...

Your frustration is not at all inappropriate: the solution to your stagnation is within easy reach. Make your way to the hut and

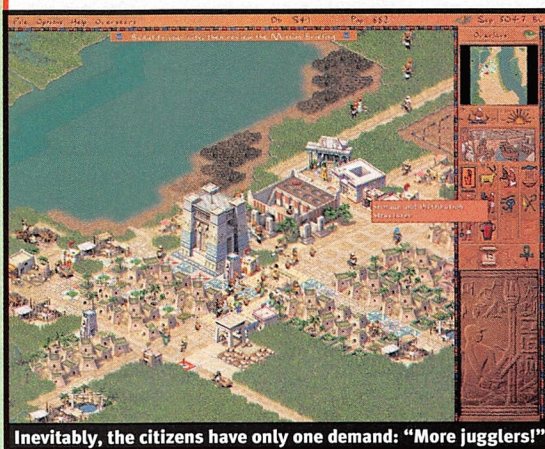
tips&tactics

PHARAOH

- Roadblocks are a godsend in Pharaoh. Using them wisely can save you plenty of unwanted frustration. Place them at the extremity of the town to contain citizens within the city limits. This stops market traders and the like from wandering down empty roads and thus wasting their valuable services.

- Residential zones should be built close to a main thoroughfare, since the walkers delivering goods and services only affect houses within two squares of the road. Also, keep your roads as straight as possible and the number of junctions to an absolute minimum.

- Markets tend to work best when situated at the end of a deadend road. This means the sellers are forced to walk in the same direction each time, hopefully right past the houses you built nearby.



place the remote control puppet inside the right-hand drawer. Head back outside and get into the cage. Use the remote control and the puppet will push the button, sending you on your way...

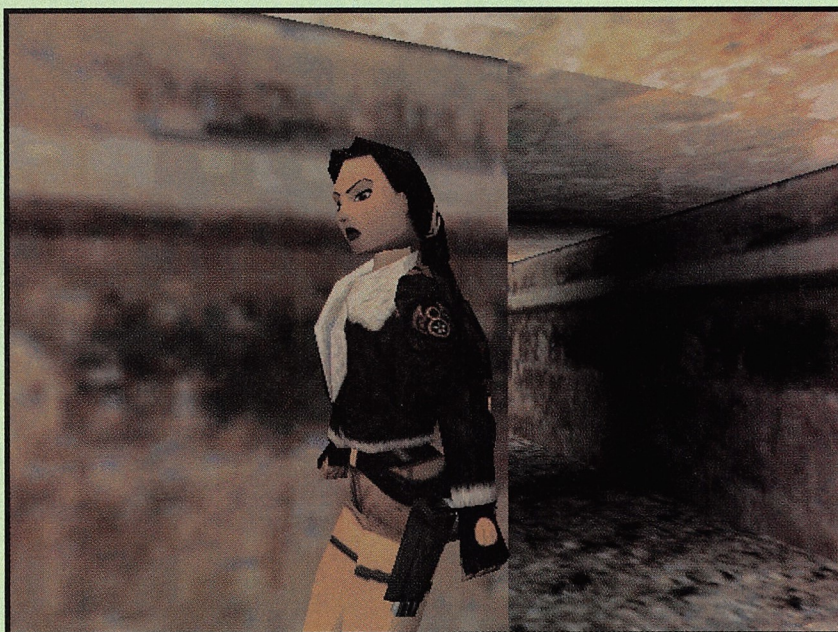
This exasperated thief just can't seem to find the keystone tree mentioned in the Hammerite book in Undercover. I've searched high and low in the garden to no avail.

Obiwan, Internet

A Observation is the key to becoming a grandmaster thief. And since the location of the switch nearby the keystone tree is so easily uncovered,

Thief - The Dark Project

Q Save me from shame among my peers.



CODE

Indiana Jones & the Infernal Machine

During the game, hit F10 and type in the following codes:

FRAMERATE - display frame rate

VERSION - display game version

ENDCREDIT - view credits

MAKEMEAPIRATE - turns Indy into Guybrush

Threepwood from Monkey Island

FIXME - moves Indy if he's stuck in a wall or corner

TAKLIT_MARION ON - God mode

URGON_ELSA - all weapons

AZERIM_SOPHIA - all health items

Madden NFL 2000

To be able to use these codes, you'll have to complete the Madden Challenge first. Once that mountain has been climbed, enter one of the following codes to activate the corresponding cheat function:

FIRSTIS20 - 20-yard first downs

PAINFUL - increased injuries

NO PICKS - no interceptions

QBINTHECLUB - perfect passes

QUARKANDSTAR - big vs. small players

ITSINTHEGAME - EA stadium

WILDWEST - Dodge City stadium

COWBOYS - Marshall's fantasy team

MOJO - team with all '60s players

SIDEBURNS - team with all '70s players

Rogue Spear

Press Enter to bring up the chat window, then type the following codes to activate the corresponding cheats:

TEAMGOD - Team God mode

AVATARGOD - Avatar God mode

STUMPY - Stumpy mode

TEAMSHADOW - Team Invisible mode

BIGNOGGIN - Big Head mode

MEGANOGGIN - Mega ▶

CODE

Head mode

CLODHOPPER -

Clodhopper mode

THESHADOWKNOWS -

Invisible mode

TURNPUNCHKICK - Side

Scroller mode

1-900 - heavy breathing

EXPLORE - no victory

conditions

NOBRAINER - brain usage

5FINGERDISCOUNT - refill

inventory

Revenant

Hit **Enter** to bring up the Message command, then type in the following codes to activate the corresponding cheats:

ALREADYDEAD - God

mode

POTIONSLOTIONS - extra potions

ALCHEMY - 999,999 gold

NAHKRANOTH - one-hit

kill

NOAMNESIA - makes character level 30

ABRACADABRA - Mana never decreases; gives all talismans

GIMMESOMEGRUB - gives five of each food type

DUMMIES - turns off monster AI

Unreal Tournament

The following codes are for single player only. Press tilde (~) to bring down the console, then type:

IAMTHEONE - activate cheat mode

GOD - God mode

LOADED - all weapons

ALLAMMO - all ammo

GHOST - walk through walls

FLY - Fly mode

WALK - Walk mode

KILLALL [class] - kills all enemies of the class you type

PLAYERSONLY - freezes time; type code again to unfreeze

BEHINDVIEW 1 - toggle view from behind

BEHINDVIEW 0 - toggle normal view

OPEN [map name] - jump to the map you type

SUMMON [item] - summon item

I'm afraid that I cannot save you from the shame you will suffer at the hands of your fellow brethren.

In the garden of trees surrounding the main building, simply search the wall for the necessary switch. If this guidance is not enough for you, and there is no depth to your shame, see the screenshot provided.

Full Throttle

Q I'm stuck. I'm in the Smashatorium and I've stalled the Boom Boom bros' car. What do I do now?

Andrew O'Keefe

Pascoe Vale South, VIC

A Head towards the area near the closed doors and the stadium will be set alight. You'll find yourself on a bronze car. Nestor and Bolus will try ram you with their car - wait till they're close enough and jump onto their contraption. As they drive by the fiery wreck, jump off and run towards it. They will follow you into it and explode.

Superhero League of Hoboken

Q I've had this game for two years now, and I'm stuck on mission set 4. What do I do?

Please help me.

Lost Hero,

Berwick, VIC

A First, you must find the diet book located in the sewers. To flush the Superheroes, use the whistle.

In the Yale/Princeton area, place the washing machine on the most appropriate spot. After the Yale faithful show, pay close attention to what they are saying. Share your newly acquired knowledge with the Princeton lot.

With the cult, splash a bit of corrosive liquid on the safe box near the "entropy". At Times Square, share your ball.

Edison - four knobs can be found on a case containing a corpse. Play with them.

Monkey Island 2: Le Chuck's Revenge - Part the First

Q I am at the very beginning of the game and I'm having trouble finding something of the thread. I had all but given up hope until I heard of you, so please don't fail me.

Murray Lake

Nhulunbuy, NT

A You didn't think it was going to be as simple as walking into an inventory shop and purchasing a piece of thread, did you? To obtain something "of the thread", take the bucket (which you acquired through your deft conversation skills with the pirates) to the swamp and fill it with some quality mud from the swamp. Take this bucket

to Largo's room, place it atop his door, and make yourself scarce (the clothes curtain is an obvious suggestion). Largo will walk right into your fiendish trap and will decide that an imminent trip to the cleaners is in order. Follow him there and pay close attention to the ensuing conversation. After Largo departs, head back to his room and close the door after you for more privacy. You should notice a ticket attached to the back of the door. Take this ticket and exchange it for Largo's clothes at the launder. You know have something "of the thread".

Monkey Island 2: Le Chuck's Revenge - Part the Second

Q I'm up to the part where I have to match up the correct quote to open the coffin to get the ashes for Rapp. I've been to the Voodoo Lady, but I need the ash.

Help me!!

Chris Hicks,

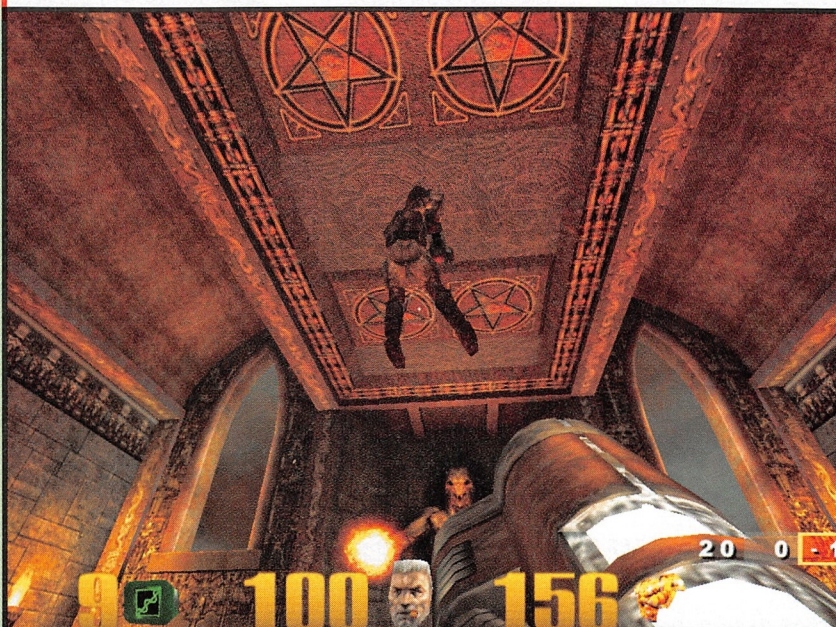
East Warburton, VIC

A Once inside the crypt, head towards the coffin located at the lower right portion of the room. Remove the Book of Pirate Quotations given to you by King Phatt. Read these and compare them to the tomb mention above. You should now be able to open the coffin with no trouble - a pile of ashes your reward!

tips&tactics

QUAKE III: ARENA

- You're not going to get anywhere until you learn the layout of each arena. Memorise the exact location of the weapons, health and powerups, and work out the best route to get from one to the next. If you favour the plasma gun, for example, you should know where to find it, then the shortest way to its ammo, then the quickest way to any armour.
- Discretion is the better part of valour, as they say. Heed this in Q3A by retreating from duels to replenish your health when it's running low. Obviously, this is easier if you've memorised the exact location of all the health on the map.
- Listen to what's going on around you. A good player can tell where his or her opponents are by the sounds they make. Footsteps are the most obvious - if you can hear them then someone is close by. Different powerups make different noises when collected; armour shards, for instance, are a dead giveaway.
- Some weapons produce "splash damage" when they miss and hit a wall or the floor. Use this to your advantage by aiming the rocket launcher, especially, at your opponent's feet. For this reason, when someone's shooting a rocket at you, it's a good idea to start jumping around like mad.



The best time to rail an opponent is while they're jumping.



Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge - Part the Third

Q I've gone to Dinky Island and found the treasure and blown the concrete up. Then I fell into the hole made and met up with Le Chuck in the underground tunnels. At the moment I'm trying to get past this bit, but I have been having trouble getting a good look at everything because Le Chuck keeps getting me with his voodoo doll.

**Nathan X
Wonga Park, VIC**

A Haste is an important ally in this section of the game. Head to the treasure room and take the ticket from the treasure chest wreckage. Then head to the First Aid room and obtain for yourself Dad's Skull. From the bin in the same room, remove the surgical gloves. A hypodermic syringe can be found in the medical drawer.

Now, make your way to the Storage room (the door is to the left of the First Aid sign). Searching this room should yield a balloon, rootbeer and a voodoo doll.

Next, head to the door found on the back wall to the right of the elevator sign. In here is a broken grog machine. Examining the coin return slot should return a coin. Once Le Chuck enters the room, find an opportune moment to wrench his own underwear from his very rotund body. He won't be pleased and will immediately zap you to another area. Return to the machine and repeat the above process, only this



time hand Le Chuck a hanky (which Stan gave to you) when he returns.

Head to the elevator and wait for Le Chuck to arrive. Time it so that you pull the lever (thus closing the door) just as he enters. Success will bring you a piece of Le Chuck's beard.

Ready for some voodoo magic? Combine all of the above items in the JUJU bag and you have yourself a ready-made Le Chuck voodoo doll. Use it wisely. The syringe might come in very handy here...



This guy's clearly not skilled in insult swordfighting

Broken Sword

Q My friend Joshua needs your help. He has Broken Sword and is in Ireland right now. Fitzgerald has ran out an been abducted and the car knocked the cover off the powerpoint. He has switched it off and now the barkeeper is waiting for him to fix the dishwasher. What does he have to do?

Joel, Internet

A To fix the dishwasher, use the wire on the washing machine plug. Simple, no?

Darkstone

Q I've played this wonderful game a fair bit but cannot put the @#\$% reeds together or blow even one reed.

Please help me, I'm going insane knowing the solution is probably all too obvious.

**G. D. Huberman
Internet**

A Once you have all five reeds, head to the room that glows green - also known as the "mouth room". Once you've killed the snakes, put the reeds

in the mouth on the platform in order from shortest to the longest. This will freeze the slithering poison-spitters so that you can lower the plank and go into the room with the crystal, which is what you need.

LEVEL 6





WHEEL OF TIME

multiplayer playguide

BY ANDREW PARSONS

The Wheel of Time is an extremely complex game. There are some incredibly difficult monsters to defeat along with having to understand four times the number of items you're probably used to with games like Quake 3 and Unreal Tournament. The single player game is tough but can be done with a healthy reserve of perseverance.

Multiplayer on the other hand can at times seem to be a daunting and almost impossible task. Know this: creativity and experimentation are your best weapons in this challenging mode.

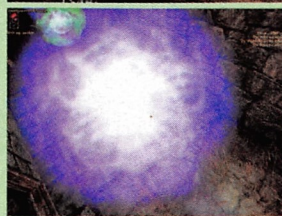
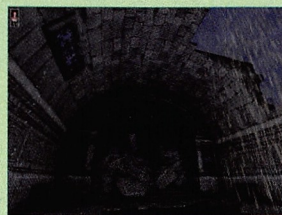
ARENA MATCHES:

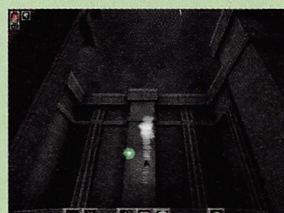
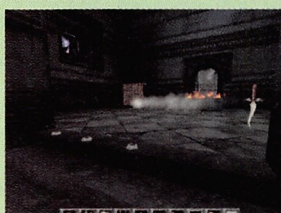
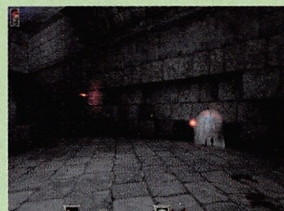
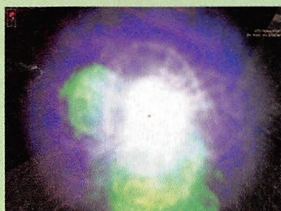
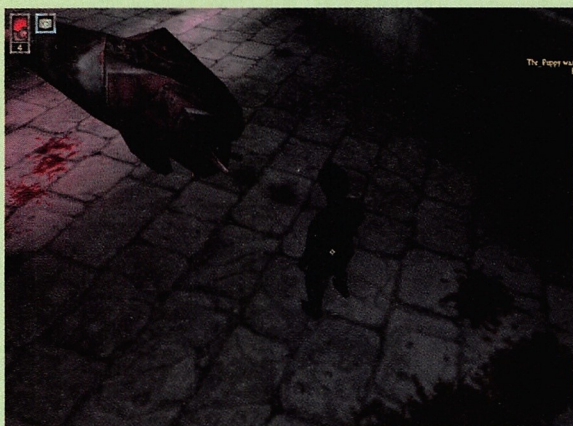
Arena matches are basically your down to earth Deathmatch games in a fantasy setting. All of your standard deathmatch

techniques apply here. In addition, however, there are a host of other features within WoT that impart much greater depth of gameplay. The following methods apply equally to Arena matches and the Play mode part of Citadel matches (as opposed to the Edit mode). Also, you may pick up some ideas here that you can apply to your single player adventure.

Rocket Jumping

With a whopping 40 artefacts to utilise, it shouldn't be a surprise that rocket-jumping is possible through the use of not one, but two different ter'angreal: Fireball and Balefire. Balefire will push you a whole lot higher than the lowly fireball, but is harder to use with a large charge-up time and is also potentially much more damaging to your character's healthbar.





That hole in the ground is my Mashadar Tendril in an Aes Sedai stronghold.

Wall Climbing

This applies to all modes of play in WoT, but can be especially effective in Arena. Some walls are climbable, so keep an eye out for them. The normal giveaway is a particular vine texture on the wall. Simply push forward against the section of wall and look up, just like you would on a ladder.

Some of these walls will just provide you a different way of reaching a particular objective, while other sections give access to areas that are otherwise inaccessible.

SPECIFIC TER'ANGREAL

Shift

One of the best ter'angreal in the game, Shift moves you through walls and doors. Some Arena maps such as Arena_o2 have secret locations stuffed full of juicy artefacts that can only be reached by using Shift.

A really nice side effect of using Shift is that any seeking missiles such as Seekers can be put off the trail by using it at just the right time.

Seeker

Seekers can be so

much of a problem that there was a movement on the WoT discussion forum to ban their use in Arena matches. This is because they are so effective at following their target that it can be incredibly difficult to shake them off. The description that comes with the game implies that the Seeker gets faster as it hunts down the target, but in practice this acceleration is not really noticeable.

To avoid one, use Shift, Reflect to push it back to the sender, Swap Places to give the precious gift to someone else, or simply use Air and Fire Shields or an Aura of Unravelling.

Keep in mind that you need to see your target to be able to fire one, but once fired you can usually forget about it.

Taint

Taint is an amazingly powerful and menacing artefact. This device permanently damages ALL ter'angreal currently in possession by your target. It doesn't make them unusable, but

instead inflicts damage on the user whenever they're invoked. Taint doesn't appear terribly often, so when it does, make sure you're the one to pick it up.

If you're the recipient, don't muck around - just drop all your ter'angreal on the ground and run for a fresh batch. It is

preferable to drop them near regular ter'angreal respawn points as inexperienced players may pick up your tainted artefacts and try to use them, resulting in damage.

Balefire

Truly the most deadly weapon in the game, Balefire allows you to do what you wish you could in other games - shoot through doors and walls. Modeled on the books' description of balefire, this artefact shoots a beam of pure energy in the direction you aim that goes through pretty much everything. So, if an opponent ducks behind a door or goes around a corner, not to

worry. It WILL find them.

Be aware that in team games this can be a double-edged sword, as it is possible for you to shoot a team-mate on the other side of the map when you fire this thing off. The downside is that the thing makes a hell of a racket and takes an eternity to charge up, all the while glowing a nice bright purple that serves as a beacon to all who want to put you out of action before you can use it.

Levitate

Levitate is a bit of a diamond in the rough. It doesn't make you rise up in the air, but rather provides a small cushion of air between you and the ground. This enables you to avoid certain traps such



The infamous "nude montage" dog.



as pits as well as giving you a level of protection against Explosive Wards.

Levitate is also useful when you've been hit with a Whirlwind ter'angreal and sent a long way into the air. The other player will let the Whirlwind drop you and turn away thinking their job is done. Imagine their surprise when you hit the ground soft as a feather and proceed to Balefire their butt.

Shields

Shields come in five different types. Each type will protect you for a limited time against spells that are made up of that particular element of the weave. For instance, Whirlwind is made from the element of air, and so Air Shield is effective against it while none of the others are. Keep this in mind and don't accuse the other person of cheating when they slam you with a Fireball when you're only protected by a Water Shield.

Swap Places

A particularly nasty device to use, especially amongst friends, Swap Places does what the name implies - causes you to swap places with the

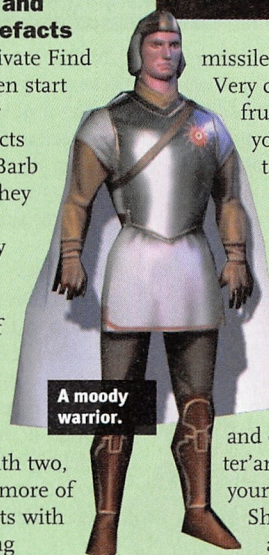
person you have targeted. The best time to do this is when seeking missiles are after you, or when you're stuck in Freeze or Whirlwind. They then cop the brunt of the attacks.

TER'ANGREAL COMBINATIONS

In addition to the use of singular spells, if you want to be successful you need to become familiar with the myriad of combinations you can utilise. There are way too many to describe here, but again, we'll provide you with a taste of what you can do.

Find Target and seeking artefacts

Simply activate Find Target and then start firing off your seeking artefacts such as Soul Barb and Seeker. They will target the nearest enemy without them needing to be in your line of sight. If you do this whilst running around, you can end up with two, three or even more of your opponents with various seeking



missiles on their tails. Very cool, or very frustrating if you're one of the targets.

Earth Shield and Earth Tremor

This is an example of a combination of defensive and offensive ter'angreal. Protect yourself with Earth Shield, run in amongst your

Poorly placed walls can actually funnel your opponents right to your seal.



The seal is on one of the shelves in here somewhere...



friends, and trigger an Earth Tremor right in front of you. Not only will you be safe from the effects of the tremor while the others take damage, while they're busy running out of its sphere of influence, you can easily target their backs with other attacks such as Balefire.

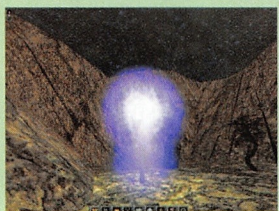
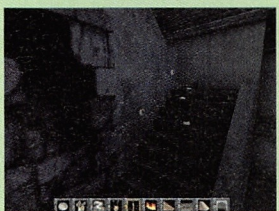
Whirlwind and others

Combining Whirlwind with other missile attacks shows a way that two or more offensive artefacts can be used effectively. It is also an example of how teams

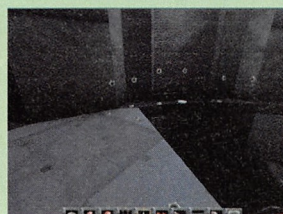
can work effectively. This is because Whirlwind is only active while you hold the fire button down, so the best combination is to have one of you Whirlwind the target into the air and have the others in the team slam him with Fireballs or similar weapons.

CITADEL MATCHES:

Citadel matches are where Wheel of Time really shines. The single player game has had mixed



Nothing that a bit of magic can't handle.



reviews, while the Arena matches are really just more of the same when compared to other deathmatch-style games, just with a fantasy & magic setting. Citadel however brings a whole host of strategy elements into play and for this reason bears examining in greater detail than the other two aspects of the game.

EDIT MODE

Citadel games have two phases, Edit Mode and Play Mode. The first mode is when all the teams "edit" their citadel, placing various traps and minions in the best places for defence, and trying to position their seals in such a way that the opposing teams find it difficult to retrieve them. Note that it

is technically possible to place the seals in ways that make them impossible to pick up but this is frowned on by the WoT community as it reduces the game to an Arena match.

Again, we don't really have the space here to cover all possible tactics, so use these ideas as starting points for your own ideas.

The first thing to consider is the order of

Balefire goes through everything including pillars and walls...



Wheel of Time brings class to character models.

placement. The best way to do your editing is to choose a location for your seals first, then place your minions, then your traps and finally the blocking items such as wooden walls. Doing it this way allows you to place your minions in areas that become contained spaces after the walls are placed while blocking the area off from elsewhere.

Examine your

citadel carefully and check out all possible entry points for weakness. For example, the first 2 team citadel map has three entrances into the seal room in the Hound citadel. Most players will actually overlook the third one as it starts with the door closed, and place all traps and minions to block the two more obvious approaches.

The most effective use of your traps is usually in combinations. As an example of this approach, you could place a Sliding Stair trap on a staircase that has a doorway below it. Add a Portcullis to this doorway and a minion or two at the top of the staircase. When your opponents try to use the staircase it will turn into a chute delivering them to the pain of a portcullis dropping on them when they reach the bottom. Then while they're stuck under the gate, your minions can come down and finish the job.

PLAY MODE

Once the traps and minions have been placed, you move into Play Mode, where the game turns into a Capture The Flag style game. Each team seeks to gather the set number of seals into their citadel. For general combat tips, refer to the Arena section above, while some additional comments about Citadel-only ter'angreal are made below.

Trap Detect

For a limited time, all the traps in your enemies' citadels become extremely obvious. Most spear traps are already visible, but pit traps can be a real nightmare when you finally get a seal in your sights. Using this ter'angreal at the appropriate time will save you the embarrassment of having to extricate yourself from one of these things while the other team is likely laughing their arses off.

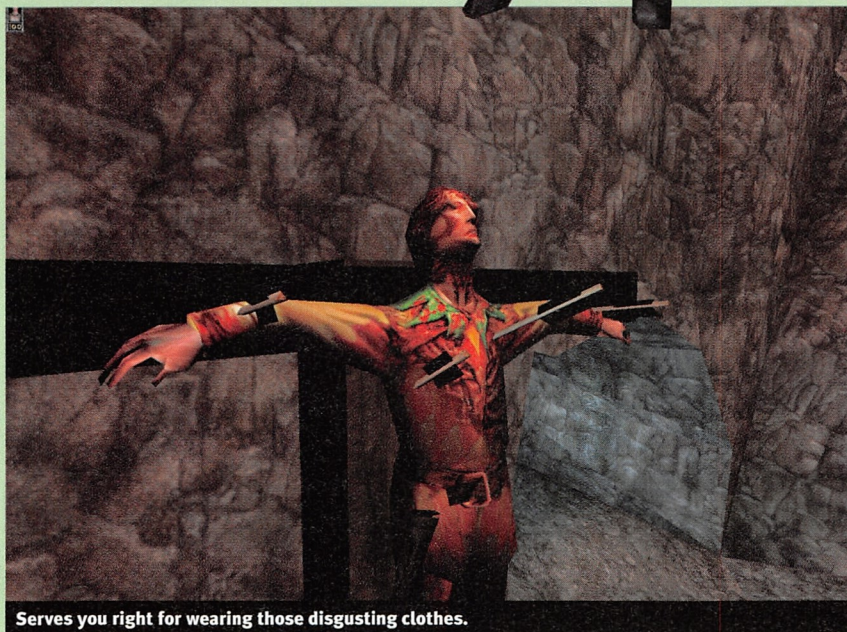
Guardian/Champion/Minion

Run out of minions? Summon some more using these artefacts. They are not at all common, so use them when you get them.

Tracer

Sometimes you just can't find the seals. When they're placed in the shadows, they are not visible at all, and it can be like trying to find a needle in a haystack. Tracer saves the day by shooting a sparkling trail from your position to the nearest seal.

It can backfire in a number of ways. Firstly, if you're too close to your own citadel, the Tracer will provide a trail for the opposing teams back to your own seals! Secondly, your opponents are going to know you're coming and so can prepare for your approach.



Serves you right for wearing those disgusting clothes.



ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

Added Attractions playguide

BY JOHN DEWHURST

John Dewhurst discusses the basic concepts to help you well on the way to Rollercoaster Tycoon mastery.

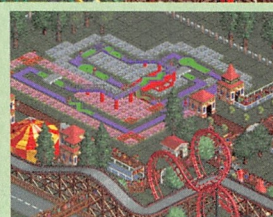
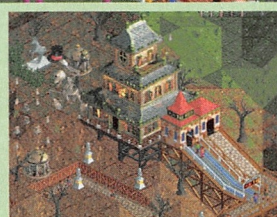
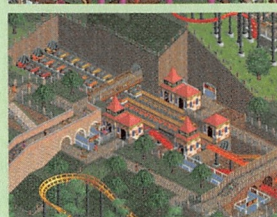
Rollercoaster Tycoon has become something of a sensation. Construction fans who want a little childish fun in their games look to this title from Hasbro Interactive for their joy. With the web site available (most of the time) for sharing tracks and other cute stuff, you've got more reason than ever to brush up on your rollercoaster construction skills.

Making a great park is

really important but the building of great rides is the overriding compulsion in RC Tycoon. The recently released expansion pack offers a swag of extra parks to play with and rides to construct. Ultimately, trial and error will reveal the best ways to build the best rides, or how to construct good paths.

The Main Attraction

Your main attractions are your track rides: rollercoasters and water rides, so this is obviously what you've been spending most of your time on. Building an excellent ride of this kind has a lot to do with placement and invention, as well as designing to the particular needs of the ride. They all offer thrills





DON'T DESTROY THAT RIDE

A little known fact is that you never need to destroy a ride. If your rollercoaster crashes, you can get it operational again (after you've made the necessary adjustments) by clicking STOP twice, in the ride window. It will then run again as normal.



in different ways, so try to build your rides to exploit these features.

Keep it a Smooth Ride

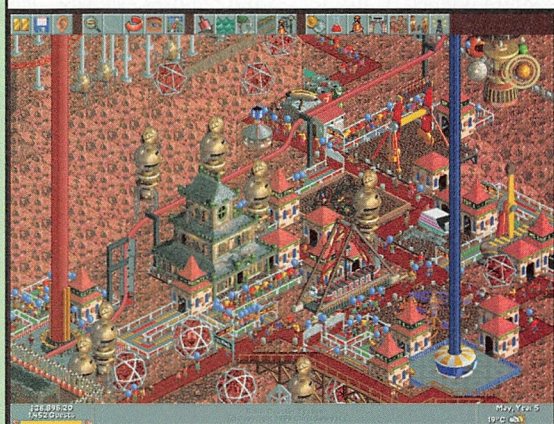
No matter what ride you're building, you want to keep the ride as smooth as possible. The end of the ride being too fast is usually what gives a rollercoaster an ultra-extreme, rather than a

medium or high nausea rating. Try to make your rides a mostly gentle descent rather than an all-out assault on the senses! Surprisingly, most great rides LOOK to run quite slow. Next time you're at a theme park, compare the actual riding of a rollercoaster to watching it go by and you'll see what I mean. The

YOUR TIME STARTS... NOW!

There are a few things to do before you start construction on the biggest rollercoaster in history. First, open your park and build a few attractions straight away, perhaps a gentle ride and a thrill ride. Also build shops and toilets, and hire some handymen and a mechanic. This way, you'll be earning money while you design your first rollercoaster.

Keep an eye on the messages that appear about rides and shops. These will help you along when you need to build more food stalls or hire more workers.



greatness is all in the design, not the speed.

The best way to keep control of your ride's speed and size is to be aware of how high your first lift hill is. The higher it is, the bigger the ride needs to physically be, in order to bring the coaster down (especially if you want the ride to have decent ratings). It's considerably easier to design a smaller, not-as-tall rollercoaster well than

a behemoth.

A good guide for all rides is to bring the ride down in progressive tiers. So after your lift hill you might have a big drop and a whiz-bang loop or two, but bring the track up again a little below the height of the lift hill. Repeat this so that the track comes down gradually with no manic drops towards the very end. Yes, this is bleeding obvious but it makes a big

difference in the design of a super ride.

Take us to the Test Site

Your best guide to the quality of your track rides is the graph of test results that you can watch as the ride goes through its first test run (or violent accident). Generally, high vertical or horizontal g-force ratings won't be a problem unless they occur quickly and in the

SEND IN THE CLEANERS

Managing handymen every time someone throws up is a waste of time. When you hire a handyman, assign a patrol area so that he's got something to do. Four sections per handyman is a safe bet for the average park. Make sure there's a handyman patrolling all the paths of your park.

Also, install rubbish bins around your park, particularly near your food stores. You'll get less litter and need fewer handymen. With these simple guidelines, you'll be getting tidiest park awards all the time.

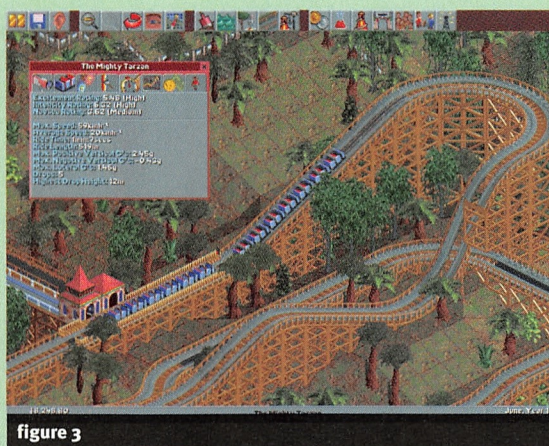


figure 3



figure 4

extreme. As stated previously, keep it smooth. You can watch the line of the test results to see where your ride is too hairy: the big kinks in the graph are the culprits. Adjust and improve your ride accordingly.

(see figures 1 and 2)

However, avoiding high nausea ratings isn't everything. Thrills are basically all that matters when you're building great rides (at least in a PC game...). Your intensity and excitement ratings are the ones to keep an eye on. Don't worry too much about the nausea unless it exceeds the ratings of the

other two categories. Let me explain: if a ride is really exciting and intense, people will still ride it, even if it does make them a bit queasy. However if a ride is ultra sickening and only a medium excitement, who will ride it? No one.

Obviously having a nausea rating of medium at the most is desirable but a ride being a little nauseous and really exciting is what it's all about! Besides, that's what toilets and cleaners are for...

That's The Brakes
(see figure 3)

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT MEAN THE MOST

Infrastructure is extremely important when you're trying to get loads of people into your park. If you're having trouble completing a scenario, it's because you don't have enough toilets, cleaners, burger stands, entertainers, etc. Make sure your park is clean and hospitable THEN go about making a great Virginia Reel!



Even in trying to make your rides run slower and smoother, they often end up running quick and being too fast in some sections. Depending on which rollercoaster you're building, you can use brakes to make the ride more manageable on your passengers.

A good idea is to stagger straight sections of track around your tracks, so that brakes can replace them if necessary. Remember you can adjust the speed of the brakes too and as your coaster descends, you can progressively lower the

speed of the brakes to smooth it out. Without brakes you need to compensate in other ways or build a smaller coaster!

Decorations
<see figure 4>

Adding landscaping and a theme is an oft overlooked feature of RollerCoaster Tycoon. In the early game, putting in scenery around rides is probably not an option, as money is usually fairly tight. As time progresses, this can be a good way to capture interest in an aging ride.

Planting lots of trees is

the easiest way to start to decorate. Another option is the use of themes. Having a giant dinosaur or skeleton staring at you as you rush out of a tunnel can do wonders for excitement. For quicker rides, excessive use of themes isn't as necessary. The slower the rides get, the more important it becomes since the guests have more time to see what's around them.

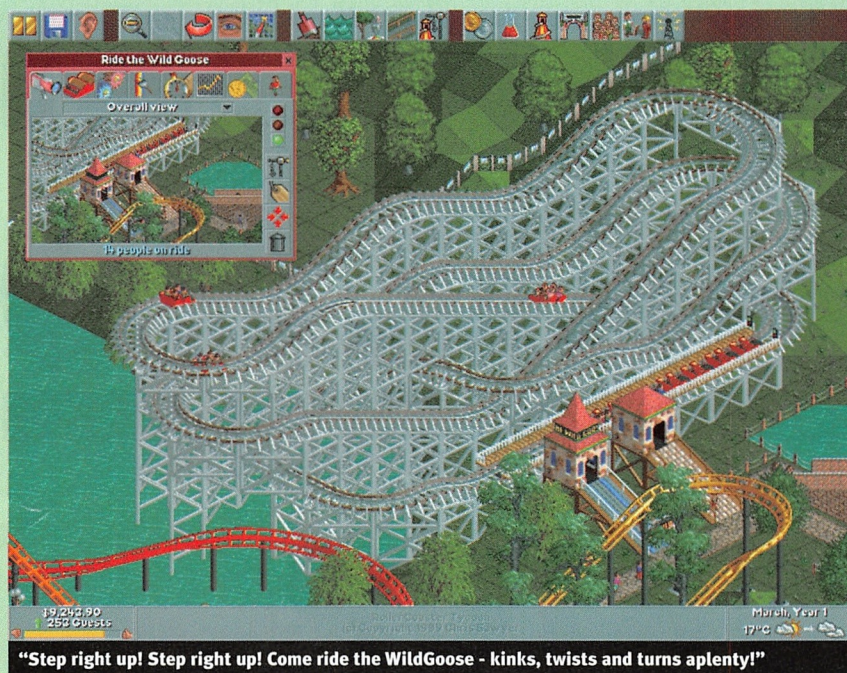
The ghost train ride is the perfect example, since it crawls at a snail's pace and requires extensive use of themes to be effective. Experiment with theme



Liquorice allsorts makes for a more exciting theme than lots of trees.

KNOW YOUR SITUATION

It's really important to use your surroundings as much as possible - don't put yourself in a situation where you have to do a lot of unnecessary landscaping. It's annoying and a waste of time. On the other hand, if you're near a lake, use it to add some thrills - if there's a forest nearby, place your rollercoaster so that it dodges through the trees. Unless you like to go around and add trees and extra features, you're better off using what's around you.



STATIONS IN THE SKY

The best way to avoid huge decelerations at the end of rides is to raise the station platform above the ground (or lower some of the track below the ground). Think of it like a sine wave - to make it smooth and continuous, you need to balance the "up" and the "down".



and see how much you can transform a good ride into a great ride.

Check your Prices

A successful park is one where you have lots of queues. Empty rides are mostly a symptom of entry prices being too high. Check the status of all your rides and see what the interest is in them. Lower your prices accordingly. It's far better to earn a constant 80c fare than have a handful of people on a \$5 ride.

If you have a good variety of rides, there's no reason why there shouldn't be constant interest in each of them. Not everyone wants to ride

the terrifying rides all the time. Try to have a cheap price on all but your very new rides - on these you can hustle!

Ride Specifics

There's well over twenty track rides in Rollercoaster Tycoon with the Added Attractions Pack, so we can't address each type individually. General design issues mentioned earlier apply to all rollercoasters but there are some important points to be made about specific rides.

The ride description in the construction window is a good guide in what to aim for in each ride. Keep your rides to what they do

best and you'll do well. For example, the mini rollercoaster works well in an out-of-control fashion, lots of turns and changes in height. So don't build it long and straight, as you might with a wooden rollercoaster.

- The wooden rollercoaster works well by its very nature - simple designs are very effective. Long straight, rising and falling track is a good idea. Save your more adventurous designs for more flexible types of rollercoaster.

- The more out-there rides, like the steel corkscrew, the steel twister and the vertical rollercoasters, often betray

you. With something so exciting as a loop or barrel roll, you have to be very careful about its placement and preparation. Also, keep these features fairly rare and special. Often one is enough to give the ride a sufficient kick. Too many and you're headed into truly astonishing nausea ratings.

- The other rides to be careful with are the ones that easily crash, like the water slide, and the bobsled rollercoaster. The water slide has the convenient half tube or full tube option to help avoid riders flying off. The best advice for the bobsled

is to make sure you do most of your changes in height on the ride, with twists up or down. Certainly don't put in any drastic shifts up or down in a straight line, or the accidents will be spectacular!

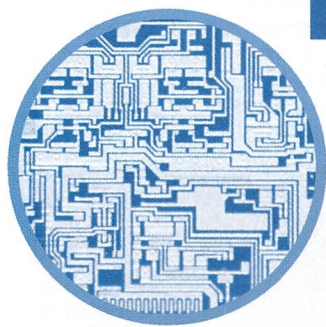
- Another important thing to remember is that many of these track rides have different modes, like reverse trains, launched starts, stand-up trains and others. Just because you've already built one type of rollercoaster, doesn't mean you can't build another with a few major changes.



John's unabashed patriotism in action - note the green and gold colour scheme.

YOU'RE IN THE BIG LEAGUES, NOW...

In Added Attractions, you have some VERY big parks to build in. If you open the gates straight away with just a few rides in place, you're going to have your guests lost and wanting to go home by the dozen in no time! The best thing to do is to cordon off the undeveloped sections of your park. Do this with signage or even better: demolish the road that leads into these sections. As your park gets bigger, start to add on and develop these blocked off sections progressively and voila! You'll have an effective giant park!



TECHNEWS

Silicon State Of The Art. By Hugh Norton-Smith

Matrox G450 Rumours • Torvald's Transmeta • Windows 2000 • AMD and Intel 800MHz processors

800MHz DESKTOP SCREAMERS



Both AMD and Intel have just unveiled the latest incarnations of their flagship processor range. At 800MHz, the new chips leapfrog the previous fastest offerings. As expected, the supply of both chips will be quite limited initially.

The AMD Athlon at 800MHz is an extremely competent processor - the ultra-optimised floating-point unit, large Level 1 cache and 200MHz bus are particularly useful under intensive gaming conditions. A word of caution for prospective buyers: AMD is currently demo-ing

900MHz Athlons with copper interconnects and a .18-micron die size. Unless you are adamant that an upgrade is in order, this supercharged Athlon might be worth the short wait.

Similarly, the Intel Pentium III 'Coppermine' at 800MHz is a highly impressive chip. Despite the integration of SSE instructions and an integrated Level 2 cache, the Pentium III doesn't match the Athlon clock-for-clock in raw gaming speed. A 900MHz chip is undergoing testing.

For most readers, the well-priced, and extremely overclockable Athlon at 550MHz remains at the top of the recommended list. This is best used in conjunction with the Asus K7M motherboard. Also recommended is the venerable Intel Celeron at a tidy 500MHz.

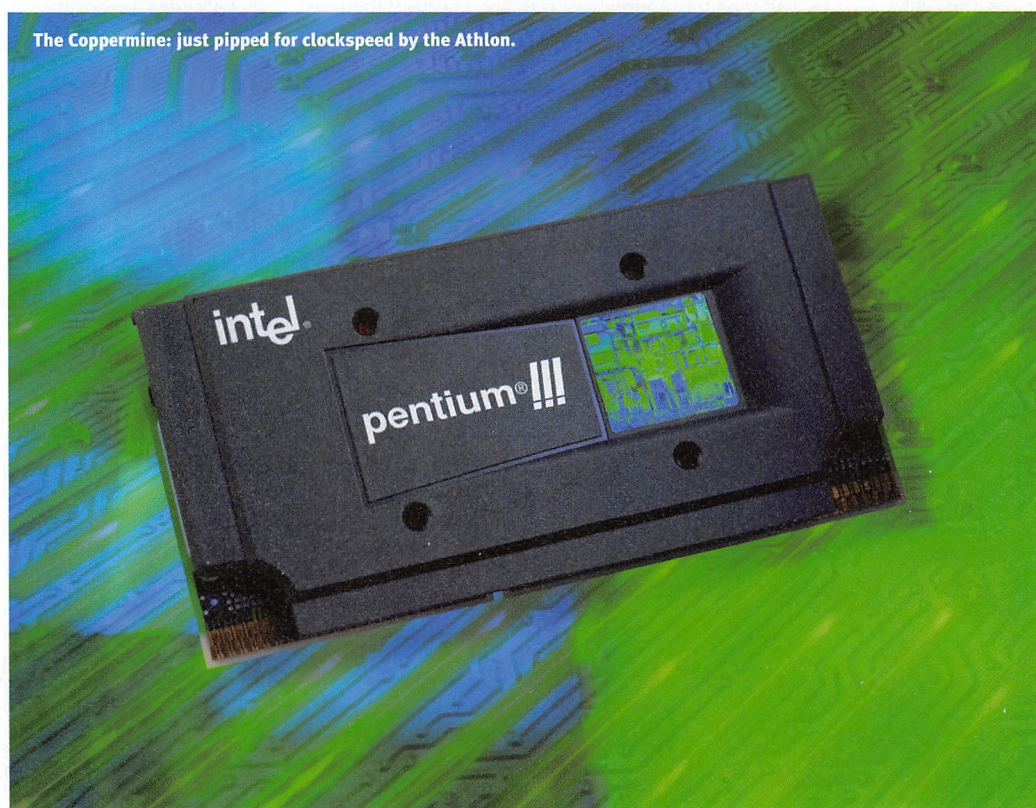
Torvald's Transmeta

Transmeta was founded four years ago. Although they have attempted to keep their work under wraps, it is widely known that the enigmatic company has been developing low-power processors for PCs, laptops and mobile phones. Codenamed 'Crusoe', the new chip is being worked on by none other than Linus Torvalds, the creator of Linux. Analysts believe that Transmeta, with the help of Torvalds, is building operating system software, most likely Linux code, into the core of the processor. Among other things, the integration of basic operating system code could dramatically improve overall performance and lower costs. Crusoe is expected to make its long-awaited public debut early 2000.

Windows 2000 Gold!

Despite its difficult development, Microsoft has finally completed the long awaited Windows 2000 operating system. However, the retail box of Windows 2000 won't actually be available until February the 17th, so that Microsoft can get the Y2k bug out

The Coppermine: just pipped for clockspeed by the Athlon.



of the equation, and the obligatory marketing machine underway. We have been using Windows 2000 Advanced Server RC2 for sometime now. We can honestly say that, despite their somewhat dubious record, Microsoft have produced a very solid product - reliable and largely compatible. If you've got the necessary computer grunt, the move to a completely 32-bit kernel can only be a boon.

Meanwhile, Windows Millennium, is expected to come out mid-2000. Millennium will feature another one of the countless revisions of the antiquated Win32 core already featured in both Windows 95 and 98. Millennium is aimed at the low-end, 'multi-media conscious' consumer market, whereas Windows 2000 is aimed at the performance and network users. Millennium will ship with a bevy of aesthetic improvements, as well as integrating DirectX 8.0. According to Microsoft, new features of DirectX 8.0 include 'more photo-realism, smoother surfaces within Direct3D, a new graphical input device control panel in DirectInput and voice communication with DirectPlay.' Hopefully, we will also see a more fully featured T&L API in the latest revision.



Should you want for AMD's 900 MHz Athlon?

Matrox G450 Rumours

Matrox is well-known for its high-end, albeit expensive, graphics products. The recent release of the superlative G400Max raised the bar for videocard products: the integration of Dual Head technology, stunning image quality and admirable 3D acceleration produced one of the finest cards on the market. Now, Matrox is rumoured to be in development of the G450. Apparently, this new card will be based around the G400 WARP architecture, with an additional integrated Transform and Lighting engine and proper AGP 4x support, similar to the all-conquering nVidia

Geforce256. Although both the G200 and G400 are *theoretically* capable of T&L, the G450 will be the first chip with a sufficiently potent architecture to make T&L a worthwhile exercise. Another interesting rumour suggests that Matrox is currently working on a standalone hardware T&L engine. With this they could manufacture a board with up to two G400 (texture units like 3dfx) chips and use up to 8 separate T&L engines on one card. Transform and Lighting is obviously one of the hottest things on the graphics scene these days: for Matrox to neglect T&L in their next product would be folly.



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RRP: \$49.95

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Whatever your opinion of the Playstation console itself, there's no denying the fact that the ergonomically superior design of its gamepads make them some of the most comfortable peripherals around. In both appearance and function, Gravis' offering is virtually identical to the aforementioned gamepads. This is certainly a good thing, making the Gamepad Pro USB an excellent choice for those looking to avoid the crippling effects of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

In spite of the less-than-quality feel of the buttons and directional pad, the Gamepad Pro USB provides exacting control over a wide variety of titles, making it ideal for games like FIFA2000 and Revolt. As with many other Gravis gamepads, the Pro USB also features a mini joystick handle that can be screwed into the centre of the directional pad. However, the fact that the Pro USB is a digital gamepad makes the genuine usefulness of the handle highly subjective.

Installation proved a snap, and calibration couldn't be easier. Overall, the Gravis Gamepad Pro USB is an excellent entry-level gamepad that's particularly well suited to technology novices.



BUZZWORD

Currently, our favourite piece of software on the Palm is Buzzword vo.6. Just tap it and an endless stream of meaningless corporate drivel is available. 'Standalone neural bugetary management' is there, along with the over-used 'quality focused, needs-based protocol'. Something stupid, but useful to drop clever-sounding words into the occasional e-mail to upper-management.

HOTWARE

3COM

PALM IIIe

RRP: \$449

Distributor: 3Com (02) 9937 5000

To me, the Palm Pilot range has always been something that was just out of reach. They were just a little too expensive for what you were getting, and a touch too 'I work in a law office'. However, the evolution of the Palm range has been occurring in earnest, and a brand new Palm is on the shelf. The Palm IIIe, with its lower price, translucent casing and smooth lines is the first of the new breed - a suit in clubber's clothing. All the usual Palm features are here - date book, address book to do list, calculator, memo pad, expenses software, HotSync to PC - but in a package that has a lot more street cred than previous models. And if you're looking for power you won't be disappointed by this baby, with room for 6,000 addresses, 1,500 memos and 200 e-mails. Although these figures aren't quite up there with the more pricey models, it is more than adequate for most users. My only real gripe is with the 'Graffiti' system of data entry. While it's easy to pick up, it has the tendency to ruin your 'real' hand-writing after long periods of use. But if you want to live in a paper-less world, and still look like the funky bad-ass you are - this is the PDA for you.

THE VERDICT

A neat little PDA, with just the essentials.

HOTWARE

GUILLEMOT HERCULES 3D PROPHET DDR-DVI

RRP: \$699

Distributor: Ubisoft (02) 9362 1414

The Nvidia powered GeForce 256 is the current King of Cards. Leaving the previous titleholder; Nvidia's TNT2 Ultra, in the dust. All that's been available thus far, though, are the SDR RAM versions of the card. While performance is certainly impressive, it's the DDR RAM GeForce cards that will give your gaming the biggest kick.

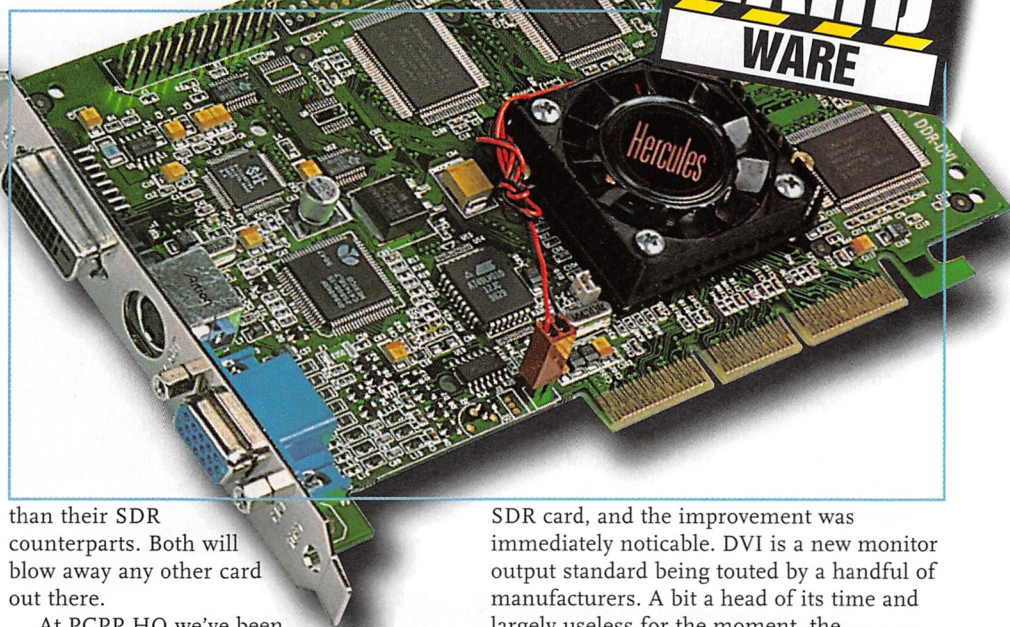
What the hell are we talking about? Memory speed, in two words. SDR runs at 150MHz, while DDR pumps out data (textures, geometry) at precisely twice the rate - a thumping 300MHz! This does not equate to twice the performance - in most cases the difference between the two GeForce cards is negligible. DDR cards offer almost identical performance to SDR cards at all resolutions up to 1024 x 768. But, if your PC is meaty enough to handle 3D games at higher resolutions, then DDR starts making a difference. At 1600 x 1200, depending on the game, you can expect around a 30% performance boost. Currently, DDR cards are about \$100 more expensive

than their SDR counterparts. Both will blow away any other card out there.

At PCPP HQ we've been playing with the Hercules 3D Prophet DDR-DVI. At \$699 it's a bit of a record-breaker in the price dept, but the performance is equally stratospheric. The DDR replaced our old

SDR card, and the improvement was immediately noticable. DVI is a new monitor output standard being touted by a handful of manufacturers. A bit a head of its time and largely useless for the moment, the Guillemot is also equipped with a standard monitor output.

Highly recommended, if you've got the bucks.



PC GAMEGUIDE



ON SALE NOW





THE BEAST

You want the best? You want the meanest, fastest, most gibbonhungry gaming PC going? You want The Beast.

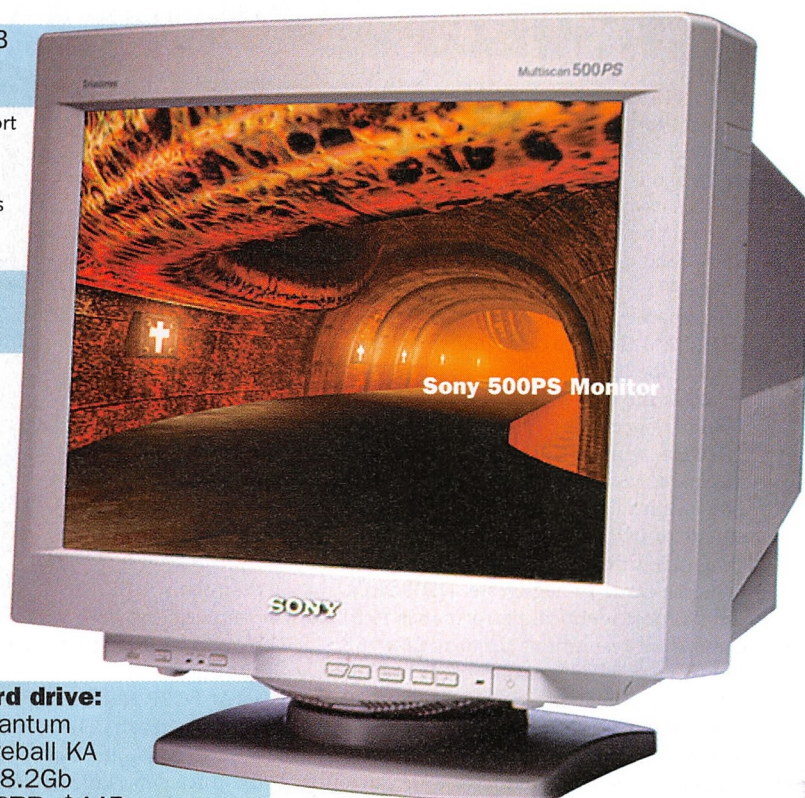
Each month we'll tell you about the best gaming gear going. Some of this stuff might only be affordable if you're some kind of lucky oil baron type, but for the most part Beast components are within reach of most gamers. We update this list each and every month so you know what's always the hottest. Hot, eh?

Sound card: SB Live! Platinum
RRP: \$599

Equal best 3D support (with A3D 2.0), with clarity that will blow you away. Audio CDs come alive.

Motherboard: ASUS K7M
RRP: \$329

The best Athlon board around. Uses the hot VIA Southbridge controller chipset. Overclockable within BIOS, and is generally the best quality Athlon board going.



Hard drive: Quantum Fireball KA
18.2Gb
RRP: \$445

With a huge 512Kb buffer and 7200 rpm speed, this is storage city for months to come.

Speakers: Imagination Technologies Sirocco
RRP: \$1195

True audiophile equipment for gamers.



CPU: AMD Athlon 700MHz
RRP: \$1500

The Athlon has proved itself, passing the gamer's test for floating point performance (equals fast Quake) and so far there's no sign of any AMD weirdness typical in their previous CPUs, like rapid overheating and a patch for every game. Just plain fast.

Graphics card: Creative Labs Annihilator
RRP: \$599

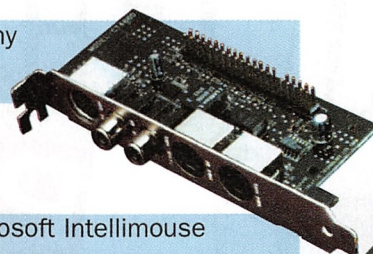
The first of the GeForce 256 cards, and currently, the king of cards. Read the review in this very issue. You will understand, you will want.

Monitor: Sony 500PS (21")
RRP: \$3899

Big, flat and big. It's a Sony, it's the best.

Mouse: Microsoft Intellimouse Explorer
RRP: \$99.95

Truly the most exciting mouse ever, this bit of gear makes all the difference to your gaming. It uses a wee laser doobie instead of a ball, which means smooth performance forever with no more cleaning. Plus it looks sexy, hard to say that about other meeces...



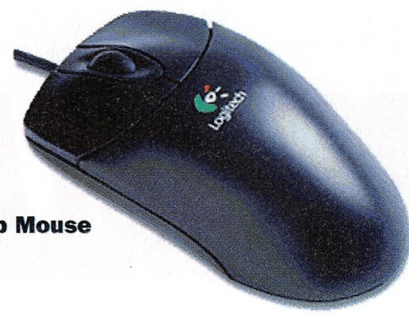
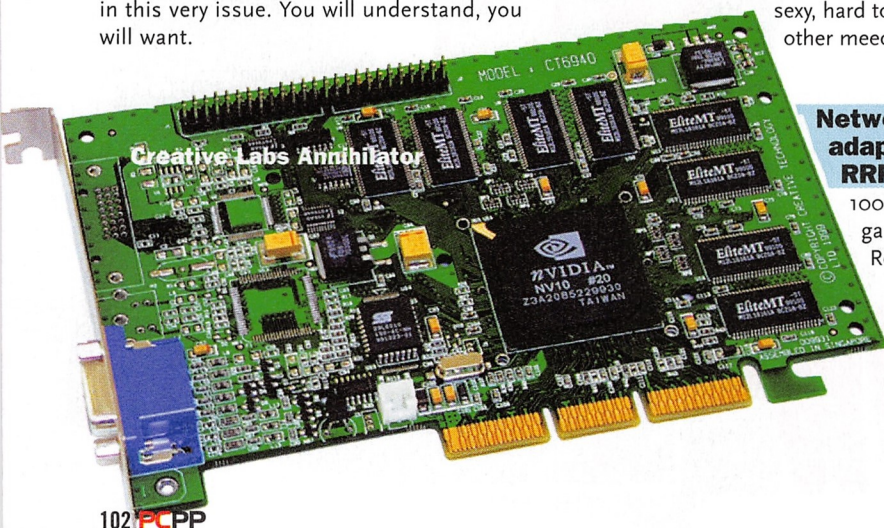
Network adaptor: 3Com
RRP: \$140

100Mbps of gaming goodness. Reliable and compatible.



Case: Supermicro SC750A
RRP: \$300

Plenty of room for advanced cooling, looks the business and has slide away side panels.



Logitech laptop Mouse

Unreal™ TOURNAMENT™



- ★ Train for combat in Novice mode. Or go Hardcore for even more intense action.



- ★ All-new and enhanced big body-count weaponry - the Redeemer, the IMPACT Hammer and more.



- ★ The most complete and challenging online multi-player experience ever.



- ★ Over 30 unique environments torqued by the Unreal engine.



- ★ Completely customisable "bots" with superior A.I. "bots" take orders and team up with you.



- ★ A single-player experience like no other - Guide your team to the title of Unreal Grand Master!

A groundbreaking new
3d combat experience from
the creators of unreal.
[Does not require unreal to play]

A new kind of
single-player experience.

A ruthless
multi-player revolution.

A team sport for
3D terrorRists everywhere.

AN ALL-NEW
STAND-ALONE
GROUNDBREAKING
SINGLE AND
MULTIPLAYER
TOURNAMENT
GAME.

(does not require Unreal to play.)

Enter the Unreal World Now

- Download the demo at
unreal.gtgames.com

Look for the UNREAL LEVEL PAK.
Available Now.





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PC know how. With Daniel Rutter.

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When you write remember to include as much pertinent information as possible. Send your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT and any associated *.INI files for Windows that might tell me more about your problem. Give me as detailed an explanation as you can and be sure to include as much detail as possible about your PC. Feel free to email your questions or, if you want to snail mail, please remember to write clearly or better still print your letters. Please note that due to the volume of messages we receive, we cannot guarantee a response to your queries.

SLOW 686?

[Note: Profanities in this message have, for your comfort, been replaced with the names of iconic anime characters - Ed]

Q My computer is a 686-300 with 64MB of PC-100 SDRAM and a Voodoo 3 2000 PCI and I get [Astro Boy] performance. It gets 10fps in AVP in 640x480. I know a guy who has a 686-333 with 48MB of EDO RAM and a Voodoo Banshee and he gets heaps better performance.

My other friend has a P187 with 48MB of RAM and a Voodoo 1 and even he gets better performance than mine. What the [Tetsuo] is wrong with my computer?

Is the Voodoo3 2000 PCI meant to have a heat sink or a fan on it? As mine doesn't, do you think I should get one? It gets very hot - do you think it's the Voodoo 3 or the CPU that makes it so slow?

David Park

A Ah, the [Speed Racer] Cyrix/IBM 6x86. Or, perhaps, 6x86MX; not only do people with these processors commonly just call them a "686", which they aren't, but they often don't know whether they have the plain 6x86 or the newer MX version (which is also just referred to as the "MII"). Yours is an MII, because the plain 6x86 topped out at a rating of 200. Note that I didn't say "200MHz" there. Allow a sinking feeling to develop in the pit of your stomach as I continue.

The original 6x86 competed with the Pentium, the MII competed with the Pentium MMX. Both are, essentially, like a Pentium Pro or P-II for integer performance at the same clock speed. And both provide less exciting Floating Point Unit (FPU) performance. 3D games are highly floating point intensive.

The kicker is that your "6x86-300" is not a 300MHz processor. It's a "PR300" processor, which means it's about as good as a 300MHz Pentium (not that such an animal ever existed without overclocking, but stay with me here) for business performance.

Its actual clock speed, though, is 233MHz, and for FPU-intensive tasks like 3D games it performs like a 200 to 233MHz Pentium MMX, generally. Which pretty much explains your Alien vs Predator results; that hot buttered video card of yours is spending a lot of time picking fluff out of its navel and waiting for your CPU to get through the geometry tasks.

Incidentally, this also means that PC100 SDRAM is a waste of money for you; you're running 66MHz Front Side Bus, and any old SDRAM would do. Your EDO-using friend (whose processor is a 250MHz unit with a PR of 333) is at no real disadvantage, RAM speed-wise.

Then again, you DO have to bear in mind that, as I write this, you can pick up MII-PR300s from online dealers for less than \$US15 plus shipping. Which sort of puts it all in perspective.

This "P-187" your buddy's running is a P-166 overclocked with a 75MHz Front Side Bus, right? He shouldn't be scoring any better than you, particularly bearing in mind his much slower video card, if his game's set up the same way as yours. Perhaps he's turned off every pretty-element he can, to get more performance - if any games you play allow you to reduce view distance or object complexity or anything else that'll make the scene geometry simpler, you should do it.

You should be able to manage the same framerates he does, more or less, but at much higher resolution and colour depth. The limiting factor in your system is definitely the CPU, but the CPU has to work no harder when you increase resolution or colour depth - that's the video card's department. For you, 1024 by 768 in 32 bit should be no slower than 640 by 480 in 16 bit.

If your computer's performance continues to suck the [Sailor Moon] out of a dead bear's [Totoro], make sure you've got the latest driver set for your video card, and consider

reinstalling the drivers and/or Windows.

DVD DILEMMA

Q I am writing to find out some information about DVD-ROMS. The main question I want to ask is if I purchase just a DVD-ROM, will it work good on my computer? I have a Cyrix M2, 300MHz, 64MB of RAM and a Creative Graphics Blaster Riva TNT. Will this play DVDs at all? What DVD-ROMS do you recommend?

The Chairstar

A If you read the above answer, you'll know that the processor you've got is probably actually a 233MHz unit, unless you've got a "PR433" M2 which actually DOES run at 300MHz. Either of these chips is capable of running DVD playback software passably well, depending on the software you use. The genuine 300MHz version is a better bet for smooth playback, and neither CPU is going to have much power left for other tasks, so your computer will be effectively paralysed while it plays movies.

You can get decent DVD-ROM drives with bundled playback software for around \$200 nowadays. The alternative to software DVD playback, for owners of slower CPUs, is a hardware DVD decoder board. These have built-in TV outputs, and generally slightly better video quality than even the best software players. They also put much less load on the CPU, so the computer chugs along as normal while playing movies. If your video card has TV output, it'll probably give you just as good an image on a TV as a dedicated decoder board, but this isn't guaranteed. Some TV outs are pretty darn dodgy.

The only significant difference between DVD-ROM drives for movie purposes is whether or not they support unlimited region changes, one way or another. Most DVD movies are coded to only be playable

LETTER OF THE MONTH

MODEM TO MODEM

Q Hey, I was wondering if there is a reason for all of the current games not having modem to modem play (Unreal, Half-Life, Kingpin, etc.) because I don't have unlimited net hours and a decent game usually takes a few hours, and my friends are a local call away. Is there any way to play the before mentioned games over a modem? Can you have more than 2 players over a modem game? Is the internet faster than a modem game?

Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Cheers,

Craig

A Yes, you can do it. No, you can't have more than two players, unless you have multiple phone lines and modems, or have some people on a local network at one end and a modem connection to another single player or network. No, Internet games aren't faster; there's less lag in a simple modem connection to a server that's local to one end of the modem link. This is why services like Wireplay and Multiplay make money.

How do you do it? Glad you asked.

Here's how to get a

Windows 95/98 network connection happening over the modem.

If you've got Win95, you'll need to grab version 1.3 of Dial-Up Networking from <http://www.microsoft.com/windows95/downloads/> or from this month's CD PowerPlay. If you've got Win98, you don't need to update it.

- In Network Properties, bind to your dial-up adapter every protocol you want to use for game networking. This includes IPX/SPX and TCP/IP (you'll probably have TCP/IP already bound for ordinary Internet access); you might want to add NetBEUI as well because it's the one protocol that needs no setup at all, and is thus useful for connection testing. Also turn on File and Printer Sharing, if you haven't already; only file sharing is necessary.

- Set your Primary Network Logon to Windows Logon.

- Whatever machine you want to use as the server will need Dial-Up Server installed. Select it from Add/Remove Programs —> Windows Setup —> Communications.

- Now go to My

Computer —> Dial-Up Networking and select Dial-Up Server from the Connections menu. It should already be set to use your modem. Select "Allow caller access" and pick a password, if you like. In Server Type select the "PPP: Internet..." option. Turn off encrypted passwords.

- You should also give the server a simple computer name, like "Jim" or something, in Network Properties —> Identification. You'll see why shortly.

- Now share a folder with Full access permissions; people who dial in can use this folder to see if they're logged in properly, by creating files in there or whatever. Copying 400 megabytes of saucy AVIs to the folder over a modem link is not recommended.

- On the client side, create a new connection in Dial-Up Networking with the phone number of whoever's running the server. Right-click it, select Properties and then the Server Types tab, and set it to "PPP: Internet..." just like the server. Enable "Log on to network" and software compression, and tag whatever protocols you want to use over the connection.

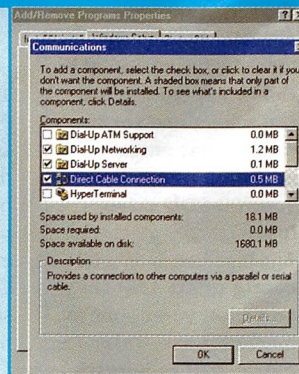


LETTER OF THE MONTH WINS THE MOST EXCELLENT SIDEWINDER AND DUAL STRIKE CONTROL PADS FROM MICROSOFT'S PREMIERE RANGE OF GAME CONTROLLERS. CHEERS MICROSOFT!

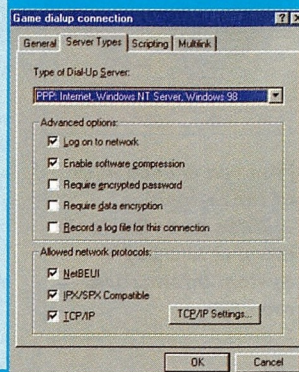
- When the server's got "Allow caller access" turned on, it'll set the modem to auto-answer and wait for a call. The client calls in, the password (if any) is entered, and the basic connection is made. To connect to the server for Windows purposes, go to Start —> Run and type //Jim (if Jim is the name given to the server in Network Properties —> Identification). This is why your server machine shouldn't be called "lafcadio341haha".

- Type the server's name properly and you'll get a window for it containing any and all shared drives, just as if it were on a local network (only slower). You can move files around by all the usual methods.

Now, you both just have to run the game you want to play and pick the protocol to use.



Want to play networked games modem-to-modem? Just follow these simple instructions.



in one of the six regions (a.k.a. "zones" or "locales"). If you want to play DVDs from different regions (say, our own Australian/South American region, and U.S. discs as well), you'll need a playback system that can change regions as many times as you like, or a "crack" for your DVD player software to let it pretend to be different regions without involving the drive. All of this violates the licensing agreements between the DVD movie companies and the DVD player companies, of course, so there's no way at all your friendly local computer shop person would help you get it all straightened out. No way at all. So you'd better not ask, y'hear?

OUT, OUT, DAMNED LOGIN WINDOW!

Q Hi, when I went to a LAN party once my computer wouldn't get into games for some reason, so I asked someone who ran the event to fix it. He fixed it, and I could play games at the LAN but it left me with a user profile for Windows 95. Whenever I started up it would say type your user name and password to logon to windows. I deleted this user profile in the control panel but it still comes up when I start up. How do I fix this thing?

Chemical THC

A Ah, synchronicity. See the answer to the next letter.

WINDOWS LOGON PT II

Q Is there any way I can keep the network installed on both my P166 and my PIII500 without having that stupid logon bit? I've tried switching the "Primary Network Logon" to Windows Logon but it still prompts me for a user name and password. I've even checked that "Passwords" and "Users" Control Panels but I can't find where to turn it off.

The P166 is running Win95B and the PIII500 is using Win98 (not SE). They're both connected through one of those red crossover cables and not coax.

Jack Banh

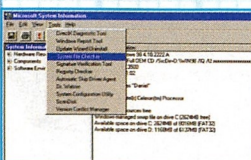
TECH TIPS

"SECRET" TOOLS...

Ever had the problem of Win98 crashing because it can't find a particular file? Don't want to reinstall Win98 in its entirety? Use the "hidden" Windows System File Checker (sfc.exe) - this allows users to check for damaged files, and replace specific files (just insert your win98 cd in the drive, type in the file name, and for the target, just enter F:\win98 where F: is your CD-ROM drive letter).

Another handy Win98 config utility that they don't tell you about is msconfig.exe. This allows you to specify exactly which files are loaded up on booting - very handy when isolating a conflict.

Ben Willemsen



[You can access both of these "hidden" utilities from the Tools menu in Microsoft System Information, too - Ed]

A It sounds as if you've still got a password set. The easy way to nuke the passwords out of good old insecure Win95/98 is to do a search for *.pwl on your boot drive, then delete every file you find. Now you should be back to a password-less state; log in one more time from the standard logon box, giving whatever username you like and NO password. Now, when you go to Network Properties and select Windows Logon, you should have a logon window-free boot again.

Some people are under the impression that Win95/98 passwords are like putting a ten-inch vault door on a cardboard box. They're wrong; the door is cardboard, too.

DIRECTX DEPRESSION

Q I recently bought a custom made computer. After receiving the computer, I installed DirectX 6.1, but it doesn't install properly. After installation it says "DirectX setup error -14". What does this mean? Games lock up with a blank purple screen. I changed the monitor and that didn't help either.

Marc Fumberger

A Ahh, mysterious errors identified only by cryptic numbers. Cryptic NEGATIVE numbers, in this case. Doesn't it take you back? O'course, when I were a lad we used t'DREAM about havin' numbers to identify our errors! T'motherboard speaker used t'click in Morse code, and that were good enough for us, y'hear?

Where was I? Oh yes. The error you're seeing means DirectX thinks the same or a later version of itself is already installed. And it's right, too, if you've got Win98 Second Edition installed; Win98SE comes with DirectX 6.1a. Your multiple install attempts might perhaps have broken DirectX, or more plausibly it might just have broken itself, as Microsoft's fine products are wont to do. The installer doesn't know this, though; all it knows is that there are newer components, and it won't give you the option to overwrite them with older ones. This, by the way, is a great improvement over earlier DirectX installers, which would cheerfully squish later versions when invoked by brain-dead game setup programs.

Aaaaaanyway. The solution is simple enough. Get DirectX 7 from this month's CD PowerPlay and install that instead. It's better.

If the broken fragments of DX6.1a are so firmly wedged in place that the DX7 installer won't work, you can either nuke and reinstall Windows, or try using the poetically named DirectX Uninstaller, found on CD PowerPlay.

BP6 CONUNDRUM

Q I am a little confused about Abit's new BP6, the dual Celeron board. It can use two CPUs that run at different speeds. Well, how can they do that? I'm looking more towards the bus speed, are they just taking for granted that people won't overclock on this board and that all the CPUs that go on that board run at the same bus speed, or can you put 2 CPUs are different bus speeds?

Jason Dunnett

A You can't use CPUs with different _bus_ speeds, but you can use CPUs with different _multipliers_. Both CPUs run at the same Front Side Bus speed - say, 100MHz - but if you use chips with different internal multipliers (which you can't change; this "multiplier lock" has been a feature of all Intel processors for some time), they'll run at different speeds.

The motherboard doesn't care if you install, say, a C-333 and a C-366; one CPU will, on average, give results a bit faster than the other, but they're not both running the same task, and the motherboard can accept the data whenever it arrives. It's not necessarily going to give you a reliable computer, and it's not officially supported by Abit (don't even ASK Intel about it!), but it will, within a loose definition of the term, work.

BENCHMARKING...

Q I have a simple question that relates to many of the articles you have printed that refer to CPU power. The number of 'operations per second' is often used as a measure of a processor speed,

however, I've often wondered what exactly does a single 'operation' entail?

Ben

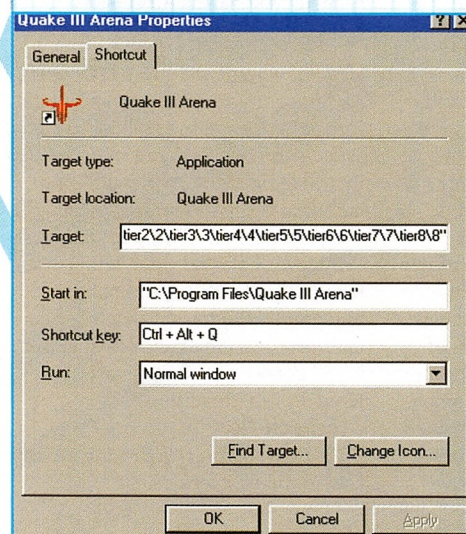
A That's an excellent question, Ben. The "operations" processors do are, simply, arithmetical transformations of numbers into other numbers. The nature of the task that's being performed, though, can make a big difference.

Operations can be broadly categorised as integer and floating point, but there's no standard measure of "an operation". This is because processors don't work in a vacuum, not in the real world; they have to get the data to work on from somewhere, and send the results to somewhere too.

All current processors have two levels of cache RAM, which hold data for quick access by the CPU and which allow the real-world performance of the processor to approach the theoretical maximum speed of the CPU core. To make an impressive benchmark, you can create some little algorithmic hamster-wheel that fits completely in the Level 2 or even Level 1 cache memory of the processor, but that doesn't tell you much about how well that CPU will do on real jobs.

The more out-of-cache data access a task requires, though, the more the CPU speed is constrained by the RAM speed. As I mentioned in a letter reply last month, this is why processors like the G4 in current Macintoshes do not deliver, in the real world, anything like the better than a billion floating point operations per second proudly claimed in the adverts.

TECH TIPS

CONTROL-ALT-QUAKE!

Check out the Properties tab of any Windows shortcut, and make use of the "Shortcut Key" option for your most used programs. You can use any combination of Ctrl, Alt, Shift, and any Letter/Number key. It can really be useful as you won't have to wade through the start menu or desktop. This tip came from another Ben. Just "Ben". He gave us his full name, but he just wants to be "Ben", in print. Hey, it worked for the dude in Full Throttle.

THE WAIT IS OVER.

Time to
kick ass
down under.

Are
YOU
with
US?

ULTIMA ONLINE DISCOVERY EDITION
COMING DECEMBER 1999



NGN

net game news

Keep face in Cyberspace

Multiplayer - Battletech 3025

<http://www.battletech3025.com>

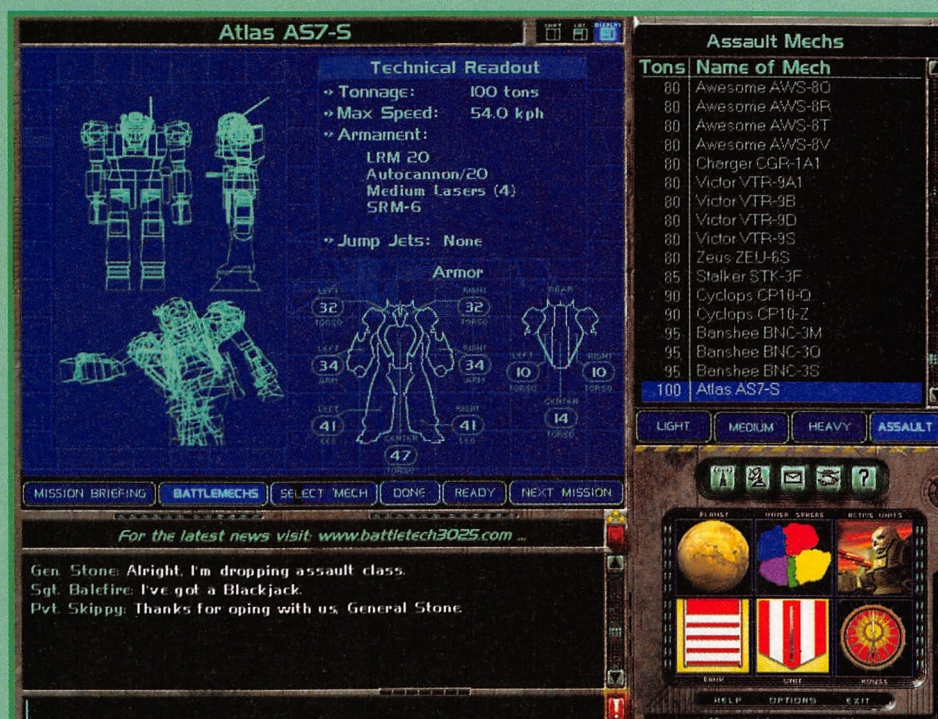
Developer: Kasmai

Due: 3rd Qtr 2000

Multiplayer Battletech 3025 is a massively multiplayer, persistent, action/strategy/RPG experience set in FASA's blockbuster future tech universe. Currently in development by Kasmai Studios, Battletech 3025 is going for the crown for being the largest multiplayer game - at least in terms of simultaneous online users - in existence. When it goes live by the middle of this year, Battletech 3025 will support up to a staggering 50,000 users at any given moment.

Choosing the right game model for Battletech 3025, then, is absolutely critical for longterm survival of the project. As is the norm in singleplayer gaming, it is almost impossible to centre the events and action in a persistent multiplayer game world around a single user. And as has been witnessed in other persistent MM games, players that aren't the centre of attention or have exhausted any possibility of future character or story development can become bored, frustrated and oftentimes disenchanted. Considering that there are 1900 worlds to battle over in The Inner Sphere (B3025's setting) and therefore plenty of space to get lost in, Kasmai have created a model that should entertain and stimulate the many different types of online gamers. For B3025 combines the instantly gratifying visceral action of mech-to-mech combat with the longterm strategy and politics of interstellar war.

Battletech 3025 will feature five Houses - or factions - that players can join and manage themselves. At the top of each house sits the House Leader, who governs that particular faction. Second in command, and working closely in concert with the leader is the Executive Officer. From there, each House is separated into



Players will be able to maintain and increase the potency of their mechs through the addition of upgrades and other technologies.

five major commands, or divisions. Each division is further divided into five minor commands, or Brigades. Each Brigade holds four regiments. To give you some idea of the scope of B3025, each house has slots for over 10,000 players. Not to put any pressure on the House Leaders, of course.

Most players will start at the bottom, as the commander of a mech, engaging in 3D battles against opposing Houses. Battles are directed from a huge hex-based map (usually consisting of around 170 hexes, each representing a key area of that planet), with the outcome of the skirmishes determining hex control.





In #44 we asked **"Given your experience with Thief, would you be interested in a multiplayer Thief game? And if so, what would make you purchase the title?"**

Dropped multiplayer

Thief remains my favourite game of all time, and the prospect of a multiplayer aspect piqued my interest. After hearing that LG had dropped the multiplayer component of T2 though, I wasn't too surprised. Thief is a single player gaming experience and should remain that way. I don't believe a multiplayer Thief would work at all.

Justine "Charlotte" Simmons

Unique shooter

I come from a history of Quake, Quake 2, and more Quake (Q3A). If Thief multiplayer can offer a different and unique firstperson shooter experience, I'm already there.

Brian Edgell

Backstabber

My question is this. If Looking Glass include a co-op mode, would you be able to backstab your comrade in arms and make off with the loot?

Maurice

No need to change

I seriously don't believe a multiplayer Thief game can work. Collecting the most loot in a mansion just wouldn't be as much fun as straight deathmatching. Neither would a Thief deathmatch be all that interesting. Imagine sneaking around then - wham! - an arrow hits you in the head and you die. Game over. That's not my idea of fun. Thief was a brilliant singleplayer game, there's no need to change it. But, I guess, if anyone can do it properly it's Looking Glass. Those guys rock!

Nightshade

Appear invisible

I can see some problems with a multiplayer Thief game. For instance, how would one thief be able to hide from another? If you're standing still in complete shadow, would you appear invisible to all other players? If you then moved, maybe the other players would only see your outline or something?

As far as game modes go, I think some sort of Thiefmatch where you're trying to kill each other would be really exciting - the tension would be unbearable! What about trying to assassinate some important person before anyone else gets to him? You'd have to escape the attentions of the guards and the other players. It'd be cool to try to create a diversion for yourself that gets another player into trouble!

Pete Foster

Modem to Modem

A disturbing recent trend has been the lack of modem to modem multiplayer support in many A-grade titles.

This month we ask, **"Modem to modem support - a necessity or a relic of the past?"**

If players so desire, there will be the option of being able to climb the ranks, eventually being in a position to contest both the Executive Officer and House Leader commands. As players move up the chain of command, the strategic and political aspects of the game will increase accordingly. House Leaders and upper command will engage primarily in the diplomacy of war, meeting with other House representatives to form alliances, establish or protect/attack trade routes, or declare war.

Battletech 3025 is certainly an ambitious project. Perhaps most of all, it is the structuring and organisation of combat, and the incredible detail in which players will be able to move within this framework, that will ensure B3025 manages to keep its subscribers coming back for more. With a beta test imminent, watch for the full PCPP review in an upcoming issue.

Sid Meier's Antietam!

<http://www.firaxis.com/shopfiraxis/>

In a typically bold move, Firaxis have decided to release the latest in their Great Battles series exclusively via the internet. The follow-up to Sid Meier's Gettysburg (92% PCPP#20), Antietam can only be purchased online at the Firaxis website. Featuring a score (that's twenty, numeral fans) of new American Civil War scenarios as well as a clever random map generator, Antietam gives more than just a fresh lick of paint to the game that had already made wargaming an accessible pastime. Heightening the realism of the Union versus Confederacy conflict is the main achievement, with Antietam boasting even more varied terrain (love those corn fields!) and unit types extending to such levels of specificity as to include historically accurate uniforms of the Texas Brigade and Louisiana



The war over corn continues apace.

Tigers, among others. Priced at a very reasonable US\$30, it will be fascinating to see how successful this venture proves to be and whether or not any other developers follow suit.



NGN Top5 Online Games

1. Quake III Arena
2. Unreal Tournament
3. Rogue Spear
4. Half-Life
5. Homeworld

To cast your vote for the Top 5 Multiplayer Games every month, email ngn@pcpowerplay.next.com.au with your favourite online game.

10 0 0



My Sphinx Has Got No Nose

<http://www.pharaoh1.com/contest.shtml>

Wannabe Egyptian town-planners have been testing their mettle in recent weeks courtesy of an online contest organised by Pharaoh developers, Impressions. Each week a new scenario is made available for download, with entrants having to build a city that meets certain predefined requirements. The keen eyed judges at Impressions then select a winner based on the sole criteria of whether they would like to live in your city. Sadly, however, they failed to appreciate the charming ambience generated in PCPP's entry by the placement of juggling booths on every street corner. While each week's winner receives a Pharaoh t-shirt and soundtrack CD, the good news for everyone is the steady supply of extra scenarios to tool around with. Sandpits, we love them.

Online Legends - Grand Prix Legends

by Ed Fox

A mere three years ago, the notion of competing in a motor race via the Internet was totally unheard of. With the technology at the time, the best any motor sport enthusiast could hope for was a challenging one on one battle using Grand Prix 2 via a "play-by-mail" structure. Sure this was great, but it quite frankly, just didn't cut it. The arduous task of racing until the red light started to flash (indicating it was soon the next players turn), hitting escape and then emailing the saved game to the next player became extremely tedious. Still, this system was very popular simply because there was nothing else available at the time.

Luckily, that was then, and this is now. The scene today is remarkably different, and in the nature of all things technical, the standards have risen considerably. These days, gamers use the Internet as businesses utilise their LANs. The concept of playing any game only in singleplayer is quickly becoming a thing of the past, as the primary selling point of titles these days is whether or not it can be multiplayered.

One sim that has seriously broken the barriers of online racing comes in the form of Grand Prix Legends. The depth of online play in GPL is like nothing seen before, providing the opportunity for virtual racers the world over the opportunity of participating in twenty car races of anything from 7 to 105 laps! Just over one year since its release, the GPL community now numbers in the thousands and is increasing every day.

Sporting a huge local following, Grand Prix Legends is clearly the "king of the online racing". The following list of resources and tools, are the essential ingredients you'll need to get racing online.



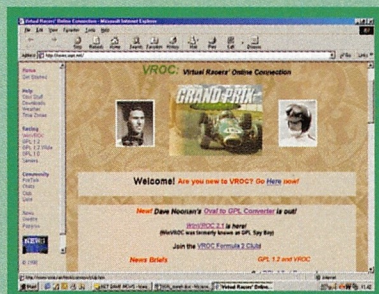
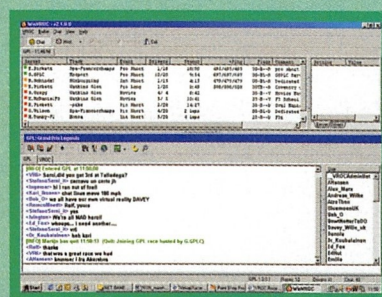
"gal", Alison Hine, is one of the brains behind Grand Prix Legends itself.

As witnessed during the hype of Grand Prix 2, its birth prompted the creation of a countless number of websites, add-ons, car-kits, editors, etc. You name it, and it has likely been done. This tradition of ripping into a game and creating every type of conceivable utility has graciously been passed onto GPL, and none stand out more than the glorious creation that is VROC!

VROC is an online service that lists all races being run online at any point in time. In order to join one of the listed races, you'll need a copy of GPL and one of the following VROC clients;

- Setup of user options on the applet's face
- Host control of race options such as car class and make
- Support for dedicated and registered servers
- Support for hosting behind a gateway

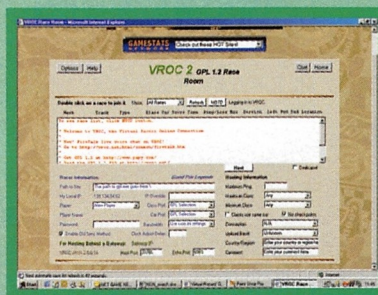
JavaVROC 2.0 requires Netscape Communicator 4.5 or Navigator 4.08 or later, or Internet Explorer v 4.72.3xx or later with Microsoft VM for Java.



VIRTUAL RACERS ONLINE CONNECTION

<http://www.vroc.net/>

The Virtual Racers Online Connection (VROC) is the number one stop for information and resources regarding GPL online. The guys (and gal) behind this site are well known in the online racing community, and the



JAVAVROC

<http://www.vroc.net/html/common/start-jv.htm>

JavaVROC is a Web-based VROC client, which provides all necessary features for joining and hosting races. This sophisticated Java applet includes:

- Support for Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer
- Automatic race list refresh
- Race list filtering

WINVROC

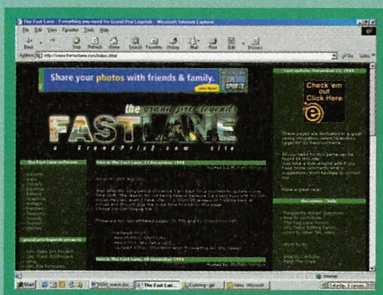
<http://www.vroc.net/html/common/winvroc.htm>

WinVROC is a superb native Windows client for VROC. This downloadable Windows program provides the same basic features as the VROC Java applet, but contains a number of additional features, including:

- An integrated chat
- Broadly enhanced control of race options by the host
- Inspection of the Internet routes to GPL servers
- Expanded support for dedicated servers and hosting behind a gateway
- Remote hosting

- Assorted other advanced features

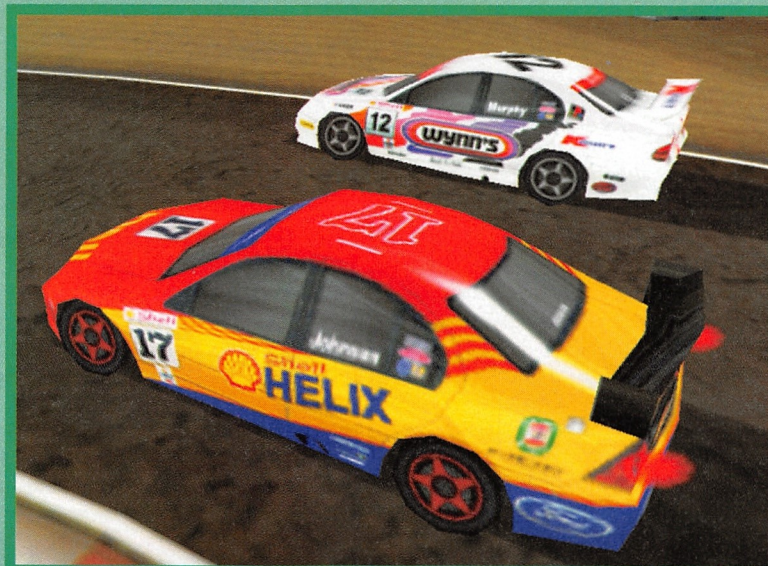
The VROC website also offers a host of cool resources designed to help get the most out of this awesome sim. Most recent is the release of Dave Noonan's Oval to GPL converter, a neat utility that migrates the oval tracks of NASCAR 3 for use in GPL (we love you Dave). Additionally, any newcomers to the GPL scene will need to patch-up with the GPL1.2, a patch from Papyrus designed to enhance the online capabilities of GPL (<http://www.papy.com/gpl/gpl.download.index.html>).



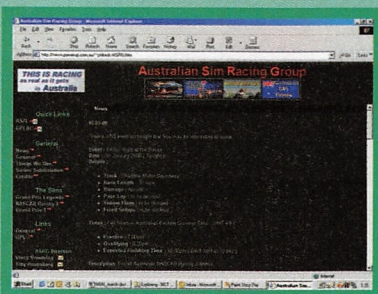
THE FAST LANE

<http://www.the-fastlane.com/index.shtml>

The Fast Lane contains the largest collection of Grand Prix Legends goodies to be found anywhere. This site covers the basics, from car setups, updated graphics and new tracks, as well as the more impressive and powerful freeware utilities - offering anything from manipulation of 3D car objects to detailed replay editors which can be used



(in conjunction with a replay of a fast lap) to learn how to race the circuits like the pros! No matter what it is you're after, you're sure to find it at The Fast Lane.



AUSTRALIAN SIM RACERS GROUP

<http://www.powerup.com.au/~philmak/ASRG.htm>

From its humble beginnings as a "jump-to" page for online motor

competitions run for Australians, the ASRG has now blossomed into a thriving online community. With participants now numbering in the hundreds, the ASRG offers local news, events and a mailing list http://www.egroups.com/group/aus_gpl for anyone keen to race online in Australia and New Zealand. The ASRG also runs competitions for Grand Prix Legends and NASCAR 3. With the tireless efforts of the ASRG directors; Vince Browning, Troy Rosenberg and Phillip McNelley, the ASRG is quickly becoming the headquarters for online racing in Australasia. Special thanks must go to Troy Rosenberg for his awesome efforts in helping build the Australian online racing community. Without his "expensive" dedicated race servers, the local online racing scene would simply not be what it is today. Well-done Troy!



Meet The Neighbours

<http://www.thesims.com/us/getcool/index.html>

As the multi-faceted delights of domestic realtime strategy draw ever nearer, Will Wright and the Maxis guys are currently whetting our appetite in a most amusing fashion with The Sims Comic Strip. In a series of still screens taken straight from the game, the two strips thus far have detailed the adventures of Gregorio the hapless artist and Carl the party-organiser. Both begin with fairly mundane situations - though you could argue that anything featuring Carl's extraordinary pink speedos must be far from mundane. But through careful application of the absurdist humour that seems to temper all aspects of the game, by the end of each strip you'll be wondering exactly what drugs the development team are on. The Urination Scene is a classic.



NGN - Action News

by Elih Brading

Epic's own Cliff Bleszinski updated his .plan file with his personal recommendations on setting up Unreal Tournament for competitive play - in this case Game Master recommends you follow the developers guidelines. Playing a professional game against your friends can be one of the most exhilarating experiences in first-person gaming, and setting up a LAN for one-on-one play is as simple as connecting your modem port:

The Official Epic Games Tourney Settings - One on One:

Weapons Stay- OFF
Game Speed-
DEFAULT
NO TRANSLOCATOR
NO BOTS (duh)
Game Setting-

HARDCORE
Mutators- NO
REDEEMER, NO
POWERUPS
Frag Limit- 20
Time Limit- 10

Cliff also announced his favourite one-on-one maps:

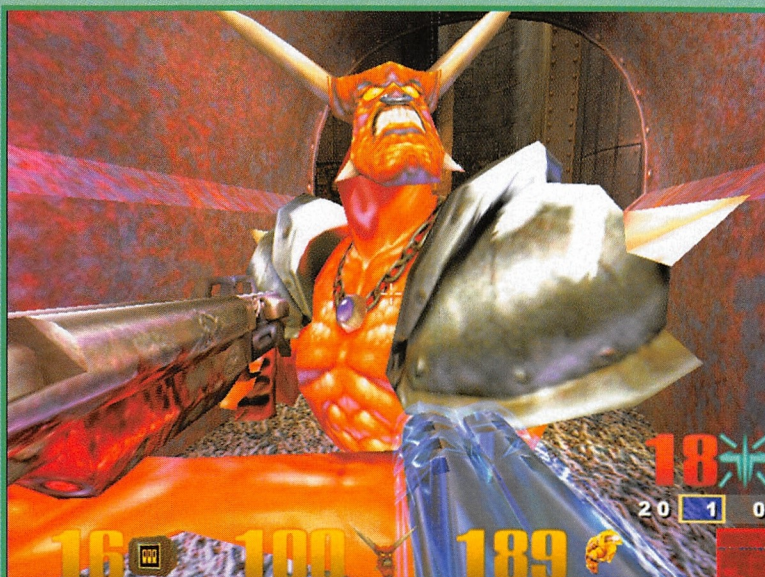
Liandri
Codex
Grinder
Turbine
Malevolence (to be released in
the upcoming free Bonus Pack
- details to be announced)



Q3A Point Release Details:

Graeme Devine made the most important update since the release of Quake III Arena, announcing what features will be rectified in the upcoming point release:

- New scoreboards.
- Team overlay tidied up
- Spectators can go through doors
- Re-add mouselook
- Callvote nextmap
- Packetloss on the scoreboard
- Delay deferred loading of players until after death
- Server browser remembers "show full"/"show empty" status
- Server browser will not refresh on



Me so horny.

stopped lists

- Show IP address in server browser
- Compressed sound support
- JPEG from disk support
- Protect CD key into a different file
- Make sure everyone can command the bots
- Load/Save config re-added

Although Quake III Arena is an extremely solid game in its current state, these originally overseen features will be a welcome addition to the arena to what some consider a game lacking in features.

BLITZ: DISC ARENA

Sports games are something rarely covered in Action News, but with an upcoming title from Swedish developers SouthEnd it may become commonplace. Blitz: Disc Arena is a futuristic game set in an arena where the players fight to get a metal disc through the opposing teams goal to score points. The game looks set to be a serious addition to this gaming mode, making up where previous titles failed by aiming for the more hardcore gaming market.

NGN Model of the Month

Quake III

Mod Name: Horny

Mod Type: DK2_Reaper

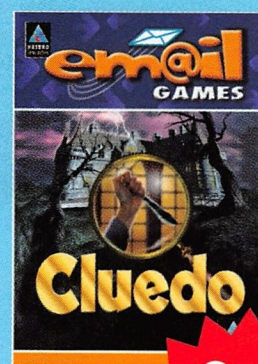
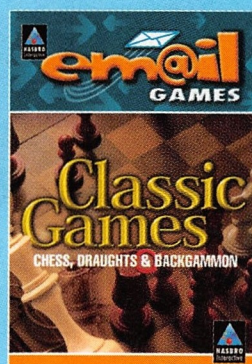
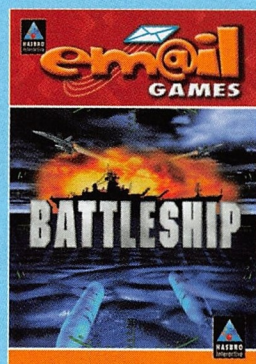
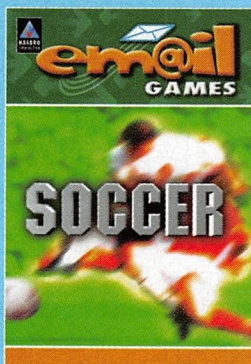
Author: Darren Pattenden

Website: <http://www.planetquake.com/polycount/>

Not only the first model released, but one of the more professional variants released thus far, the Horned Reaper fits the theme of arena combat perfectly. Utilising a model and skin created by Darren Pattenden, one of the developers behind Dungeon Keeper 2 and animated by id software's own Paul Steed (see interview on page 38), this model breathes and snorts fierce quality.



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NGN Map of the Month

Quake III

Map Type: Tom-DMr/Tom_Tourney

Name: Mustaine's

Madness/Mustaine's Tourney

Author: Tom "Paradox" Mustaine

Designed For: 4-6 FFA/ 1-1 TOURNEY

Website:

<http://www.planetquake.com/quake3/hosted/maps.shtml>

Mustaine's Madness was the first free map released for the Quake 3 Arena engine, and it still remains one of the most professional creations to date. Crafted by Ritual Entertainment's Tom Mustaine, it's obvious from the outset that Tom had previous experience with the Q3A, as well as an extensive knowledge of the limitations of the Q3A engine.

The action revolves around a central outdoor area, with a small collection of narrow corridors interconnecting back to the outdoor playground - item placement, weapon balance and precarious powerup placement make for smooth, action packed gameplay against 4-6 opponents.



Architecture and level layout is nothing short of superb - there's an extensive array of columns and niches that make for some dart-and-hide combat - it's a fantastic deviation from the traditional corridor shooter setup.

The two railguns situated on opposite

sides of the expanse make for some interesting face-offs in a tournament situation.

Mustaine's Madness is a fast new favourite among the scribes of PCPP - unzip it to your baseq3 folder and join the fray!

Designer Magnus said that "to make this title come true we started analysing other games, what was good about them and why people loved them, trying to get back to that very essence of gaming - great gameplay. We went through all the great games we had played over the years. We played with the thought of improving the old hits with tomorrow's technology."

It looks to be a deviate of Qpong, a Quake2 sporting modification that has enjoyed huge success in the United States. If the game ends up scoring a publisher, we could be playing it from the comfort of our lounge chairs in no time.



NGN Mod of the Month

Quake III

Map Type: Paintball

Name: - The gauntlet

Author: Eclosis

Type: Graphical & Sound Modification

Website: <http://www.eclosis.hypermart.net/quake3/>

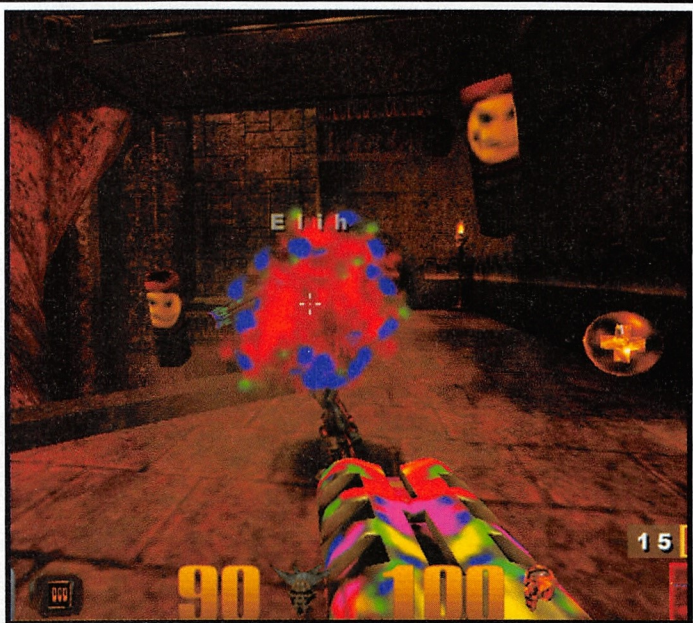
<http://www.planetquake.com/eclosis/>

Quake III Arena is quite a dark and morbid game - brighten it up - morph the gibs into jovial fun with Eclosis's Paintball mod.

This month's best mod turns out to be the only one released (at the time of writing) for Quake III. Although it's been done before for Quake, Quake II and Goldeneye 007 to name a few - Eclosis's is perhaps the best yet because of its small filesize and simplistic nature. The graphical patch replaces the standard weapon flares and projectile damage animated effects.

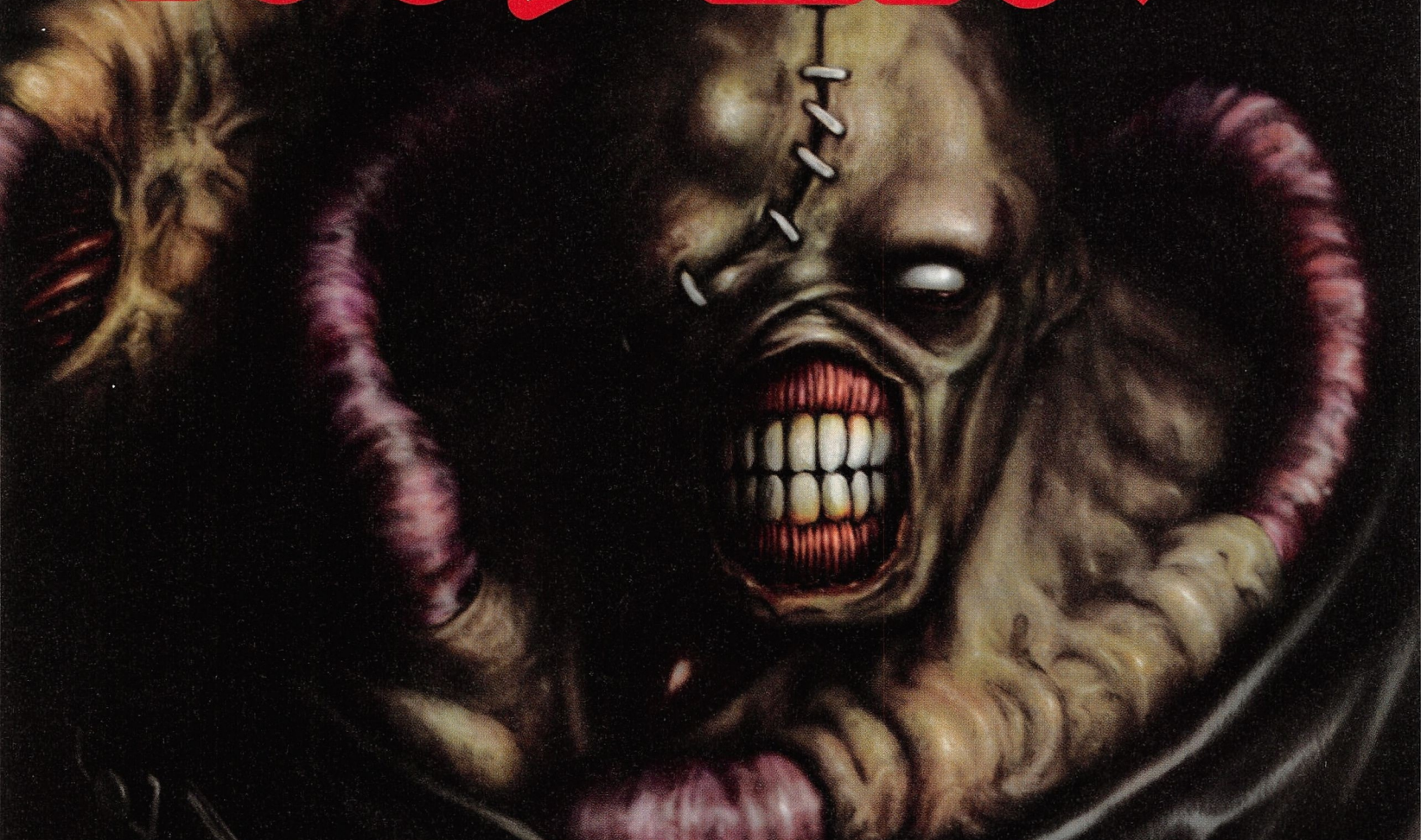
Not only is it an absolute blast to play, the patch might be useful for those of you who have small children or underage teenagers who may be inversely effected by the normal level of carnage present in the game (yes, the tongue is in the cheek).

Eclosis is likely to have his own domain name on PlanetQuake by the time you read this - check it out for further updates.



◦ DREAMCAST ◦ PS2 ◦ PLAYSTATION ◦ N64 ◦ PC ◦ GAMEBOY ◦

HYPER



**RESIDENT EVIL 3 NEMESIS
GRAN TURISMO 2
QUAKE 3 ARENA**

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CD POWERPLAY #46

Starting CD PowerPlay

Welcome to the latest edition of CD PowerPlay. This month's cd includes some of the hottest demos from around the world. Starting off, we have C&C: Tiberian Sun (better late than never), the latest Final Fantasy, Interstate and SWAT installments, as well as all the latest and coolest demos we could get our hands on. As always, navigation through the online menus is easy. Simply click on the category you want and then select the game or utility. We hope you enjoy this month's CD and hope to see you back next month for another dose of gaming goodness.

cdtech@powerplay.next.com.au

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PATCHES

Abomination patch -v2.6.4

Update Features:

- In campaign mode - the player is no longer able to select un-activated structures on the Satellite Map (HQ, etc.) and crash the game.
- The /quit command in Multiplayer games has been supplemented by a CTRL & F12 keyboard shortcut.
- Logitech wheel support
- A fault in the enemy structures called Plague Generators, rendering them invulnerable to user attack has been eliminated.
- The Multiplayer Capture the Flag map DEATH ZONE has been altered to work correctly.
- The passing of incorrect messages to client machines in Multiplayer mode has been eradicated.
- The deploy mines secondary objective now always provides mines.
- Female voice samples for "I'm on offence" and "I'm on defence" are now correctly ordered.
- Invisible doors in some large locations are now visible.
- Enemies no longer move off of the map and remain beyond weapons fire range.
- The Obelisk of Subservience explodes, when destroyed.
- Several minor grammatical problems in the text have been removed.
- Brood attack skill now has accompanying sound effects.
- The chat window in the satellite map screen is no longer overlaid by animations.
- Lair Growth rate has been increased to 13 hours per cycle, easing the pressure in the WAR section of the strategic game.
- Extraneous "are you sure" dialogue boxes are no longer present.
- Successful defence of a research facility is now always registered.
- Characters no longer lose equipment when entering umbilicals.

TIBERIAN SUN

Category: Real Time Strategy

Developer: Westwood Studios

Need: P466/32MB, W95/98

3D: N/A

Multiplayer: TCP/IP, IPX, Modem

■ Tiberian Sun is the stunning sequel to Command & Conquer. Set in the near future, GDI and the Brotherhood of Nod continue their epic battle with high-tech advanced weaponry, 3D dynamic terrain, immersive graphics and highly addictive game play in solo and multi-play modes. The demo features two brand new levels of Tiberian Sun. The first mission is a tutorial about how to play Tiberian Sun. The second mission gives you a heavy dose of C&C action.



DISC 1

FINAL FANTASY VIII

Category: Role Playing Game

Developer: Squaresoft

Need: P200, 32MB, W95/98

3D: Direct 3D

Multiplayer: N/A

■ The latest version of one of the best-selling RPG franchises takes the features that made its predecessor a success to the next level. Final Fantasy VIII combines an epic story line with dynamic role-playing elements, music, and well-defined characters. A revolutionary new Battle System has been created to add more customization to your characters by way of the Junction System. The latest features such as Dolby Surround Sound, Pocket Station compatibility, and CG movie integration have also been incorporated into this game, adding to its technological advancements.



Demise

Category: Role Playing Game

Developer: VB Designs

Need: P133, 16MB, W95/98

3D: Direct 3D

Multiplayer: N/A

■ Demise is a game based on role-playing with a fantasy setting where you create your own characters and take their roles in an alternate reality. Demise is very large and can be explored for hundreds of hours by multiple characters that you have the ability to create, shape, and command as you see fit. Once you start playing, you will realize just how little you really know about the world of Demise—and how much there is for you to discover. When you're ready, you can embark even further into the game-playing experience by talking,

trading, and exploring with other people over the Internet.

Demolition Racer

Category: Driving Sim

Developer: Infogrames

Need: P2-233, 32MB,

W95/98, 3D Card

3D: Direct 3D

Multiplayer: N/A

■ Pure Destruction!

Infogrames presents the most intense driving experience ever seen on the PC. Causing havoc, mayhem and destruction is what Demolition Racer is all about. Race and demolish 15 cars on the track. Battle it out in intense "last man standing" demolition derby bowl matches. Demolition Racer features the US Demolition Derby



MAJESTY

Category: Real Time Strategy

Developer: Hasbro Interactive

Need: P166, 32MB, W95/98

3D: N/A

Multiplayer: TCP/IP, IPX

■ Majesty is a unique sim putting you in the crushed velvet hotseat of your own kingdom. With an epic quest before you, you make the decisions of where to build your settlement's guilds and temples. From these you recruit a varied cast of larger-than-life heroes. Each one has a mind of his own and must be enticed to meet your goals, via rewards you offer and spells you cast. Meanwhile you must make sure that your treasury stays flush with cash to support these and other outlays necessary to maintain a thriving medieval town. The fact that you are being barraged by attacks from mythical beasts and fantastic creatures doesn't make your job any easier.

PATCHES

Age of Wonders v1.1

BUG FIXES:

- AI:
- AI in both World and Tactical modes has been enhanced
 - World AI sometimes produced "AI Exception" errors
 - World AI sometimes refused to end it's turn
 - World AI sometimes attacked allied players
 - On some systems, the game ran significantly slower than it should
 - Sometimes the game would slow down for no apparent reason
 - Sometimes the game would not exit to Windows properly
 - Sometimes sounds would not play properly, producing "clicks"
 - Resolution-Switching sometimes crashed or redraw incorrectly
 - Ice Storm was in the Air Sphere instead of the Water Sphere
 - All Combat Spells have been given +1 ATT
 - The following spells have been given an -additional- +1 ATT: Call Flames, Death Ray, Flaming Arrow, Slow, Solar Flare, Vaporize
 - Race Relations now go back to their default at a rate of +1/-1 per turn
 - Walls now protect defenders better
 - Flamethrower now has ATT 4, DAM 3, instead of the previous ATT 1, DAM 1
 - Summoned Units can not be transferred between campaign scenarios
 - Leaders can no longer be given First Strike
 - Life Stealing now takes a maximum of 1 HP per strike, only when attacking
 - Great Hail now strikes 21 times (3 per hex), instead of 35 times (5 per hex)
 - Winds of Fury now has a +2 ATT bonus when used on Flying units
 - Units no longer block Breath attacks
 - Animated units no longer give EXP when killed
 - Dwarven Berserker now has Cave Crawling
 - Ring of Free Movement no longer gives its owner Swimming
 - Valley of Wonders campaign scenario tweaked for better gameplay
 - Trade Route campaign scenario tweaked for better gameplay
 - Rise of the South custom scenario now has Wizard's Towers with spells for sale

Close Combat IV update

- "Loading" lockup fixed. During an operation or campaign, on the last battle of a turn the game would sometimes lockup at the end of the battle while the "Loading..." tag was up.
- Game launching from Mplayer and the Zone is fixed.



PATCHES

-Force Pools now refilling at the beginning of the day. During an operation or campaign, there was a bug where the force pools were refilling after the morning turn and not the beginning of the day.

-Force Pools now reading correctly off of historical script. During an operation or campaign, there was a bug where the force pools were refilling one day behind on the historical script.

-Increased the value of neutral and enemy held victory locations for the SAI

-SAI vehicles will clear their moves when the megatitle they are in gets attacked - it will only do this if the specific unit is attacked.

-All support units are Cehunting, if they don't readily spot an enemy - the new SAI is more aggressive.

-Problems in Custom Scenarios with the removal of reinforcements from battlefields on days after the first were fixed within Scenario Editor.

-Fixed Battle group force pools for better attrition.

-Heavy mortars (12cm and 4.2inch) rates of fire were reduced.

-Force pools were changed so that the Wurframen does not appear for veteran thru hero force strength levels.

-The accuracy of the Wurframen rocket was reduced.

-The ammunition problem with the Wurframen was fixed.

-The minimum range for the Wurframen was fixed.

-The clip rate of the Mauser Grenadier weapon was fixed.

-A double weapon for the Mauser Grenadier soldier was fixed.

-The breakdown number of the gomm gun on the M36 TD was fixed.

-AT rifle grenades for the Garand and Mauser/Grenadier was fixed.

Codename Eagle patch

Voodoo3 2/3000 1024x768 and above video resolutions.

Menu crash bug fixes.

Mission bug fixes.

Multiplayer scoring system improved.

Multiplayer internet fixes.

Multiplayer chat system added.

In game console for game tweaking and multiplayer settings.

Multiplayer time/frag/score limit.

Better weapon handling.

Drakan patch v4.44

Better joystick/gamepad support

New 3D benchmarking feature. The output is compatible with benchmarking utilities such as 3D GameGauge.

An auto save file is now created when you first transition to a level. The file can then be loaded in to allow you to

REVIEWED P50

SWAT 3

Category: 1st Person Shooter

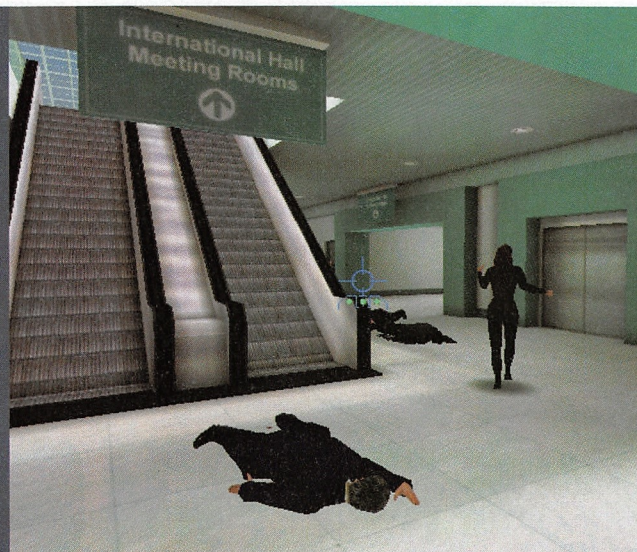
Developer: Sierra Studios

Need: P200, 32MB, W95/98

3D: Direct 3D

Multiplayer: TCP/IP, IPX

■ SWAT 3 is a first-person tactical police simulation where players assume the role of LAPD SWAT element leader. You command a five-man team throughout the chaos of hostage rescues, high-risk warrants, barricaded suspects and dignitary protection. Venture into the depths of Los Angeles in pursuit of dangerous AI-driven suspects who range from international terrorists to disgruntled citizens. More than 150 dynamic motion-captured characters react to your every move.



Association license and a rocking original sound track featuring Fear Factory and XL Records artist Empirion.

Interstate '82

Category: Driving Sim

Developer: Activision

Need: P233, 32MB, W95/98, 3D Card

3D: Direct 3D

Multiplayer: TCP/IP, IPX, Modem

■ It's 1982 and auto-terrorism is at an all-time

high. The U.S. is in crisis and you, legendary road warrior, Taurus, are dealing with a crisis of your own. Your long-time partner, Groove Champion, is missing and it's up to you to keep him from becoming a skid mark in the mother of all wars on wheels. Wage fully charged vehicular combat as you strive to uncover and destroy top secret forces before they drive you-and the entire country-to the brink.



GABRIEL KNIGHT III

Category: Adventure

Developer: Sierra Studios

Need: P166, 32MB, W95/98

3D: Direct 3D

Multiplayer: N/A

■ The case begins when Gabriel is invited for a weekend at the home of a currently dethroned royal scion. Grace is delighted, assuming that at last they're moving into the kinds of circles a family like the Ritters ought to hobnob with. But it turns out that the 'Prince's' motivation for inviting Gabriel was not a social one. He has a new infant son and is concerned for his safety because the Prince's family has been plagued for generations by what seem to be a secretive sect of vampires.



Test Drive 6

Category: Driving Sim
Developer: Infogrames
Need: P233, 32MB, W95/98, 3D Card
3D: Direct 3D

■ An all-new version of the largely successful Test Drive racing franchise, Test Drive 6 has a completely revamped physics model. It gives each car in its class a specific driving style, handling model, and a realistic skin. The game features interactive driving environments that include breakable objects, unexpected obstacles, and nerve-racking shortcuts. Cars race through outdoor cafés in Paris, France, as well as the back alleys of Hong Kong.



TRICKSTYLE

Category: Hovercraft Sim
Developer: Acclaim
Need: P233, 32MB, W95/98, 3D Card
3D: Direct 3D
Multiplayer: N/A

■ Race high above futuristic cityscapes on state of the art hover-boards. TrickStyle features an exceptional physics engine and state of the art character animations. Accurate collision spheres allow for true character interaction and stunt based racing - a first in the genre. TrickStyle's node based track design allows for multiple routes through each of the courses, enhancing replay value.

Disc 1 Patches

Abomination patch -v2.6.4
 age of wonders v1.1
 Close Combat IV update
 Codename Eagle patch
 Drakan patch v4.44
 Flight simulator 2000 updates
 Freespace 2 v1.20
 Homeworld v1.04
 Indy Jones Infernal Machine
 Rogue Spear v2.05
 Soul Reaver 1.2
 Spec Ops 2 v1.1.1
 Tiberian Sun 1.17 update

Direct X tools including latest Direct X 7.0a

Extra!

Warcraft III preview
 Quake III Arena Tools

PATCHES

continue from the start of the level.
 Fixed bug where you would sometimes lose crystals when hot keying between weapons.
 Fixed crash that sometimes happened when using items in the inventory.
 Fixed rare crash when loading in saved-games. Your previous saved games (even the ones that crashed before) can be loaded using the patched version.
 Fixed minor level-specific gameplay bugs.
 The boss at the end of the game is now smarter and harder to kill and also now honors the difficulty level.

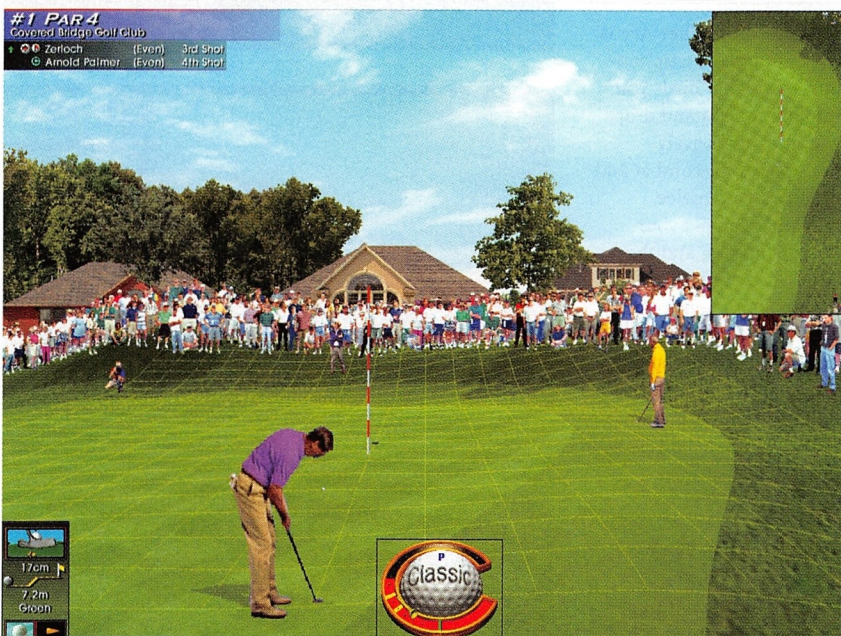
Flight simulator 2000 updates

The update includes several changes that should improve the smoothness of the simulation, especially during turns. Includes patches for Standard and Professional versions of the game.

Freespace 2 v1.20

Glide texture stretching fix
 Standalone server CD checking fix
 Jump Node placement in Fred2
 Pilot's score added to multiplayer debriefing
 Technical database does not show duplicates of each weapon
 Intro movie no longer shows up twice in cutscene player after campaign
 Objectives in Templar campaign assigned points
 Wingmen now receive a score bonus when large ships are destroyed
 Mission 3-4 conversation added
 Templar 3 mission objective text altered
 M-02 debriefing /Return to base issues fixed
 Mission 3-7 messages changed to accurately reflect mission occurrences
 Loop 2-1 directives issue resolved
 Mission 1-4 failure debriefing added
 Loop 1-2 message timing optimized
 Loop 2-2 directives cleaned up
 Agrippa persona fixed in mission 3-5
 Loop 1-3 mission outcome for blowing up civilians fixed
 Loop 1-3 in mission messaging fixed
 Mission 1-8 briefing icons fixed
 Mission 1-5 Discovery/Trinity personas fixed
 Training 5 directives cleared up
 Mission 3-1 message timing optimized
 Mission 3-6 directives corrected
 Mission 3-8 briefing icons corrected
 Mission 3-9 alternate names removed from ships
 Mission 3-9 weapons loadout fixed
 Cyclops bomb names fixed
 Mission 2-7 directives fixed

DISC 2



LINKS LS 2000

Category: Sports - Golf
Developer: Microsoft
Need: P200, 32MB, W95/98
3D: N/A
Multiplayer: TCP/IP, Modem

■ Links LS 2000 is the newest edition of the all-time best-selling golf simulation game. More than 17 years of passion and precision have evolved into Links LS 2000. The realism of the ball's flight and its interaction with the meticulously rendered terrain separates Links LS 2000 from other PC golf games. This newest version features improved tree and foliage graphics, the addition of Fuzzy Zoeller to the selection of 12 golfers to choose from, the addition of two new commentators, five new modes of play, additional sky scenes from which to choose, lessons for helping new PC golfers, and support for the MSN Gaming Zone.



Boarder Zone

Category: Snowboarding
Developer: Infogrames
Need: P2-233, 32MB, W95/98, 3D Card
3D: Direct 3D
Multiplayer: N/A

■ Boarder Zone is the most realistic snowboarding video game of its generation, with amazing landscape graphics, realistic sound effects, various weather conditions and lighting effects. You will feel the contact of the snow, just as if you were on real slopes. The tracks take place in three different environments - Alpine, Forest, and Village, including every type of riding surface that affects the board handling and riding speed differently. The action features several practices from freeride sessions to pure freestyle riding so get ready to wipe the snow off your face!

PATCHES

Homeworld v1.04

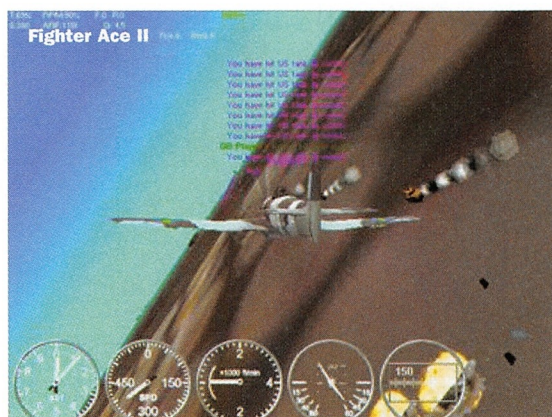
- Defender gun stats adjusted
- Heavy Corvette build time reduced, build cost reduced
- MultiGun Corvette build time reduced
- Minelayer Corvette build time reduced, build cost reduced
- Cloaked Fighter gun stats adjusted
- Carrier build time decreased
- Carrier hyperspace cost increased
- Attack Bomber armor increased
- Missile armor decreased
- Missile tracking decreased
- Missile Destroyer mass increased
- Bounty rating capped at 250.
- Homeworld now checks all available CD-ROM drives for the Homeworld
- CD - the Homeworld CD can be placed in any CD-ROM drive on the system
- Cheat detection for multiplayer games.
- Screensavers will no longer activate when Homeworld is running
- Various Save Game Bugs fixed

Indy Jones Infernal Machine

This update for Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine has been modified to improve gameplay and AI.

Rogue Spear v2.05

The special keyboard keys (arrow keys, numeric keypad, etc.) can once again be remapped under non-English versions of Windows. Rogue Spear should now run under Windows2000. GameSpy support has been added. As part of this, the behavior of the "Announce Server" option has changed. If this option is checked, your game info is broadcast to the GameSpy master server. The server will no longer pause until the armpatch timeout has expired while waiting for clients who have armpatches turned off. Support has been added for users with multiple network connections to choose which connection to use for a multiplayer game. The problems with the "Lock Teams" option should be cleared up. The blank dialog that a client received when joining a full game should now display the proper message. Clients who disconnect during the loading sequence will no longer crash if they reconnect while the game is still in progress or in the results screen. The armpatch timeout was reduced to 30 seconds meaning laggy clients will not delay multiplayer game starts for more than that period of time. Clients that disconnect during the loading sequence will no longer delay the game start until



Hype - The Time Quest



Bugs Bunny: Lost In Time

Category: Adventure
Developer: Infogrames
Need: P166, 32MB, W95/98
3D: N/A
Multiplayer: N/A

■ On his way to Pismo Beach, Bugs Bunny accidentally finds and activates a time machine. That waskily wabbit is up to his old antics once again. Bugs Bunny is lost in time and he needs your help to return to the present. There are several things he must do in order to find his way home, including defeating Marvin the Martian, kicking Daffy Duck in the pants, running from Elmer Fudd, and blasting Yosemite Sam back to the stone age. It won't be an easy task, because blocking his way back to the present are some of the wildest troublemakers Bugs has ever known: Elmer Fudd, Witch Hazel, Yosemite Sam, Rocky, and Marvin The Martian.

Fighter Ace II

Category: Flight Sim
Developer: Microsoft
Need: P200, 32MB,

W95/98, 3D Card
3D: Direct 3D
Multiplayer: TCP/IP

■ Microsoft Fighter Ace is a premium, subscription-only game that hurls you into the cockpit and drops you into a massively multiplayer air combat and ground attack melee guaranteed to get your heart pounding and the adrenaline squirting through your veins. If you're ready for the challenge, then strap one of World War II's mightiest fighters or bombers to your virtual backside and prepare for battle.

Hype - The Time Quest

Category: Adventure
Developer: Ubi Soft
Need: P00, 32MB, W95/98, 3D Card
3D: Direct 3D
Multiplayer: N/A

■ Hype, a heroic medieval knight, falls victim to the curse of Barnak, the Black Knight, while attempting to save the kingsom from an evil curse. Thrown into the past, far from his imperiled king, Hype is unable to rest until he returns to his on time

FLANKER 2.0

Category: Flight Sim
Developer: SSI
Need: P200, 32MB, W95/98, 3D Card
3D: Direct 3D
Multiplayer: TCP/IP, IPX

■ Without compromising the technical excellence of it's famous predecessor, Flanker 2.0 presents players with stunning graphics and streamlined playability! Using previously classified Russian satellite imagery, this state-of-the-art combat sim provides photo-realistic terrain. The improved flight dynamics, new 3D sound system, and accurate damage modeling offers players a true combat experience. Novice users will be delighted by the intuitive menu system. From the interactive training sessions to the ultra-realistic flight model, this Russian combat flight sim has something for every armchair pilot!



CRUSADERS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC

Category: Role Playing Game
Developer: 3Do
Need: P166, 32MB, W95/98
3D: Direct 3D
Multiplayer: N/A

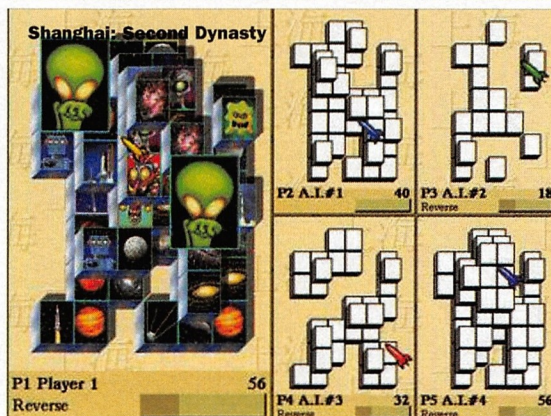
■ Drake, a loner, toughened by exposure, hardship, and a life of fighting the scourge that destroyed his family as a boy, is swept up into the midst of a new Crusade. He must join the High Guard as they try to rid the lands of the Legion of the Fallen. With swords and sorcery, Drake must fight his way through 5 distinct realms. From the spires of the Citadel to the murky depths of Duskwood Drake will run, jump, duck, fight and cast spells as he becomes ever more powerful and must eventually challenge the leader of the dead army himself.



The Longest Journey

Category: Adventure
Developer: FunCom
Need: P166, 32MB, W95/98
3D: Direct 3D
Multiplayer: N/A

■ Imagine being able to travel between these two worlds, between Stark and Arcadia. Imagine being able to Shift between realities as easily as stepping through a doorway. In The Longest Journey, you can. And in order to save the precious Balance between worlds, between order and chaos, between science and magic, you must. The Longest Journey is an epic adventure through the twin worlds of Stark and Arcadia, seen through the eyes of April, an 18-year old art student.



period and takes revenge. Help him find the key to time travel and use the future to influence the past, and possibly even change the course of time... Explore different worlds where you will meet many interesting characters, including a dragon whose back proves to be an amicable form of transportation. Learn to fight and cast spells for your protection. It's your only hope.

Renegade Racers
Category: Driving Sim
Developer: Interplay
Need: P166, 32MB, W95/98
3D: Direct 3D
Multiplayer: TCP/IP

■ When Buck Billionaire issues a call to all renegades around the world to participate in his Renegade Racing adventure, he receives more responses than he can believe. It seems everyone considers themselves to be a renegade of some form or another. From tens of thousands of entries Buck selects twelve invitees from such diverse places as

America, England, Jamaica, the Russian Federation, Transylvania, and India. Each feels that they're a renegade from their chosen profession and/or lifestyle. And they each believe that winning the race is the solution to their renegade status, a way to bring themselves back in line with their homes, professions, or peoples.

Shanghai: Second Dynasty
Category: Puzzle
Developer: Activision
Need: P166, 32MB, W95/98
3D: N/A
Multiplayer: N/A

■ Shanghai: Second Dynasty extends its tile-matching puzzle and traditional Mah-Jongg game empire with 10 new and classic games. Pair up tiles as fast as lightning in Classic Shanghai, battle and build in Dynasty and try to predict the ever-changing winds in the all-new Windstorm. Plus, enjoy four versions of the genuine, four-player game of Mah-Jongg. The tradition of addictive tile-matching fun lives on!

PATCHES

the armpatch timeout has expired.
 Hitting escape during a multiplayer loading sequence will no longer cause a hang or crash.

Soul Reaver 1.2

- Much greater stability
- Support for the Interact ProPad 6 and all other gamepads with less than 8 buttons
- Previous Saved Games can be used with V1.2 Upgrade

Spec Ops 2 v1.1.1

Patch 1.1.1 will add several new features to the Spec Ops II game and upgrade some existing items.

- Thailand combative missions.
- Adds Stealth mode - restrains "buddies" from engaging enemies unless attacked
- Fine-tunes AI commands (F1 - F4 keys)
- Fixes team friendly fire in group death match games
- Inverts mouse - add line to level .mrf in "common" section (case sensitive) InvertMouse
- Removes time limit in Antarctica

Tiberian Sun

Updates the game to 1.17. Fixes minor glitches and bugs within the game.

Disc 2

UTILS

Cacheman
 CuteFTP
 DirectX 7a
 Gamespy 3D
 ICQ
 Intel Processor Frequency
 Utility
 Jetcar
 Kali
 mIRC
 Napster
 Paintshop Pro
 UltraEdit
 Webshots Desktop
 Winamp
 WinMorph
 Winzip
 X-Setup

Extra!

EDITORS

Interstate '82 Map maker
 Nocture Editor

QUAKE 3 Extras

15/4/13/2002

SOMETIMES NEGOTIATING REQUIRES MORE THAN A HANDSHAKE.

■ exec scan procedure.....
security level COV9.....
.....clearance granted.

■ semi-automatic machine gun, govt. issued

■ silencer

■ mobile

■ handcuffs

■ classified data

■ auto-scrambling

PASSPORT

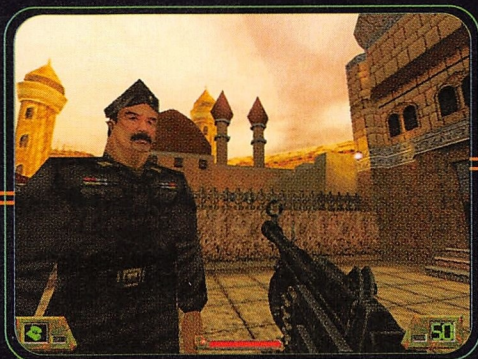


United States
of America

■ generic cigarettes

■ identification

■ titanium shell



■ Saddam's Baghdad Palace

■ Sniper View in Kosovo



■ Thirty real-to-life missions spanning five continents plus innovative multi-player modes.

■ 3-D accelerated Quake II engine upgraded with GHOUl rendering system for unprecedented detail and faster gameplay.

■ Immersive storyline written in collaboration with Counterparts author Gonzalo Lina plunges you into the secret and deadly world of a modern-day mercenary.



■ Siberian Military Base

■ New York Subway

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE®

PACK YOUR BAGS.
YOUR COUNTRY IS CALLING.

Four nukes have been stolen from a Russian stockpile and it's up to you to do the U.S. government's dirty work. Your mission: travel to the world's most dangerous political hotspots tracking down the warheads as they exchange hands with terrorists, skinheads, and countless militants. With sniper rifle in hand and white phosphorous grenades at your side, you realize that good aim and ammo will only get you so far. This is a battle of intelligence where strategy is the only plan of attack and the hunt is just as tricky as the kill. Tearing past enemy lines, you zero in only to find one nuke. Something is amiss. Someone has escaped you. So much for an open and shut case.

■ E3 ACTION GAME OF SHOW - ALL GAMES NETWORK

■ E3 BEST OF SHOW - THRESH'S FIRING SQUAD



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IN-BOX

Letters Tip #7: Any letter requesting an Ed comment is only asking for disappointment.

WRITE TO: PC PowerPlay Letters, Level 6, 418A Elizabeth St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010. letters@pcpowerplay.next.com.au



JOLT COLA

Letter of the Month

A six-pack and Jolt t-shirt for...

The Traditional Sense

I would like to comment on the current style of humour your magazine seems to be employing with annoying frequency. The best examples have arisen in the December 'Lara Croft' issue (PCPP#43). On the spine of the magazine is written "Hmmm... That looks whippable..." (Which is a direct quote from Indiana Jones @ the Infernal Machine, might I add - Ed) while one of the screenshot captions on p60 reads "...taught her to go down".

You may wish to argue that I am reading the innuendo into these words, but I don't think anyone would really take that seriously. Your consistent application of this kind of humour points to an acceptance and encouragement of these jokes. Never mind accusations of sexism or whatever - it is yourselves you are letting down the most. This kind of humour just makes you look really pathetic - in the traditional sense of the word. These kinds of example are not confined to that particular issue either. If you want to debate this point I will find plenty of other instances of pre-pubescent styled jokes.

It is a shame that a magazine that is on the whole fairly decent would feel the need to degrade itself so thoroughly. Your attitude towards sex makes it appear that whoever is behind these jokes obviously finds this humour an outlet that may be lacking in their normal life. Of course, I do not pretend to know the person or people behind these remarks, I am only commenting on the way in which you seem to want to present yourselves. The humour you are using is not adult at all; it is completely juvenile.

Making bad jokes about adult themes is very different to exhibiting adult humour. I believe you are underestimating the intelligence of your younger readers if you think they will be entertained by such one liners.

Steve Turner, Victoria

Agreed. PCPP's captions have ventured down many avenues during its lifetime, pointless jokes merely being one of them. The direction has changed once more, as we hope should be obvious throughout this (and the previous) issue. Let us know what you think about how things are being fine-tuned.

Byte Size

This is a request for that freaky "Ed" guy to put some brackets in this letter and tell us all something.

J. Zimmer, Email

("Something" - Predictable Joke Ed.)

Quick Run Down

I have an issue I would like to discuss. I myself have spent countless hours devising original game ideas. I have figured out a few original games, but lack the knowledge to develop the games myself.

One day, a completely original game popped into my head. Immediately I typed out what I was thinking, and I was happy with it. Considering my lack of knowledge, I decided I'd attempt to approach a popular gaming company, Microprose. On my first email, I told them I had a completely original game idea and I wanted to know if they were interested. Of course I got back a reply that they might be and they told me to email them a quick run down of the game (no details) and they will assess the game idea. I did so, and got my second reply of (surprise, surprise) something like this "we cannot accept unsolicited ideas. Please contact an agency, etc, etc". It suddenly occurred to me that they have now stolen my idea, for free. I can't copyright an idea.

How does a gamer such as myself get into the business of game development? I can't believe I was taken advantage of in such a nasty way. I do have some other ideas, but my biggest is now gone. Microprose have the idea, and they will do whatever they want with it. I know this is a dog eat dog world, but that is insane.

Peter Koevari, Email

Thanks, Pete, that's a great idea for a feature.

Christmas Parties

I was reading your magazine and I saw a few letters related to the PC v Console war. I personally think there is no point fighting about it because PCs will always easily come up ahead. But with so many different opinions arising, I was wondering if there were any arguments at Next Publishing? You know, PCPP v Console mags. Do you guys curse as you pass the N64 Gamer guys walking by in the hallway and ridicule the Australian Playstation guys when they come to you for advice on how to write their pathetic reviews? What about your Christmas parties and company picnics? Do you usually see a few biffs? If you guys are fighting, you have to hold your head high and fight for the respect PC users deserve. You must never surrender to the dark side.

Deniz Mustafa, Email

Hang on a minute, are you suggesting we know how to write pathetic reviews?

Low-level Language

That's it! I believe that if I knew where Ben Lansdell (PCPP#44) lived I'd drive around to

Byte Size

After seeing the cover of PCPP #43 it raised a question that has plagued me ever since Tomb Raider. Does Lara Croft actually have nipples?

Chris Lynch, Email

And is Gordon Freeman's wedding tackle still intact? Answers on a postcard, please.

his house and beat him up. What's with saying all this crap about Billy Gates? For starters he didn't write DOS, he bought it for around \$10,000 then sold it under Microsoft and got rich. BIOS isn't written in BASIC, it's always in a low-level language like machine code or ASM. Otherwise it will run too slow, as BASIC wasn't known for its extreme speedy-ness. And he didn't write BASIC. That was around in Commodore 64's and old Apple IIe's and such. He probably had somebody port it over. So there. Take that. He's just good at selling stuff, and he's not so fantastic.

Laurence McLean, Email

Anyone else interested in writing Bill Gates' biography would be better served contacting Microsoft directly - and not us. Thank you.

Brad Pitt Skins

In regards to the letter in PCPP#44: Who's your favourite game babe? How about who's your favourite game dude? I'm sure there are other gay gamers like myself that get quite excited listening to Mr Duke Nukem, with his strong masculine voice and sexist overtones. (I personally believe his sexist attitude toward women, and his ability to treat them as objects rather than real people, just hides his own suppressed homosexuality). Tomb Raider should give people the choice of selecting a Larry Croft instead of Lara Croft. And where are those Brad Pitt skins for Quake? If I'm going to run around killing people, I might as well look good doing it!

Shane, Email

Picture Any Female

I have been playing Ultima Online for almost two years now (and am on the edge of my seat constantly waiting for the "imminent" release of the Australian server) and throughout the time I have seen many, many female characters in the game. Why is it then after all this time I always

Byte Size

Are gaming companies so bad at making games that they need to use sex as an advertising tool? What's your opinion on this subject?

Joshua Radke, Email

Or how about this: why are they so bad at advertising that they have to constantly resort to sex?

Byte Size

That's odd... Who's the guy you call Ed who keeps writing in other people's letters?

Yun Khang Lai, Email

Okay, we suppose it's time to reveal his identity. The person responsible is actually (Snip! - Ed). Damn.

picture any female character I see as a fat, white, balding, middle-age man? Probably because it's a stereotype we all have about only men playing video games.

I see people having met "online loves" and getting "married" in UO and half the time it feels to me like a gay wedding in Vegas. As for people who admit they are male, but like to "roleplay" female characters... pfft, you sicken me. Roleplaying a knight is one thing, but roleplaying a transsexual is another.

Do you guys actually know a game that is played by a majority of females and not males? If you do, I'd sure like to hear what it is (and please don't say something like Virtual Cooking).

Matt Hobbs, Email

PCPP has long championed the rights of the transgendered gaming community, so this news is most heartening indeed.

Hefty Credit Card

I don't know how any one could pay money for Everquest - or should I say Evercrack because both are probably equally addictive. The problem I have with these kinds of games is the crazy amount of time you're supposed to spend advancing your character. This is usually done by hanging around in dungeons for hours killing monsters, not to mention all the sucking up to higher-ranked players for help and items. These kinds of games chew up a big portion of your life and all you get out of it is a hefty credit card bill, a sore mouse-clicking finger and a mind that burns out while you wait for the game to stop lagging. But it's not all bad; you can sell your character to some lazy bugger on Ebay for five dollars. People, this kind of online RPG is just not worth it. Just say no.

Selvo, Email

You won't find anyone who disagrees with you around here.

Bump-mapping

I was looking in the score list in issue #43 and I saw there is a game coming out next month and you gave it 19%. It's called Theme Nudist Beach. I know this is bs, but where can you get it from? Does it have bump-mapping? Surely a 'game' like that deserves more than 19%.

Rowan Robinson, Email

Yeah, we'll pay that.

Byte Size

Who the hell bloody cares about game babes? What is so good-looking about Sophitia? What's the point anyway?

The Grim Reaper, Email

Bet you installed the nude patch for Drakan, anyway.



Half-Life (left) and The Last Express (right). Game endings: not much cop?

Desire Stirred

I find your publication refreshing and relevant. No matter what field of knowledge a person may hold, in your mag there is a sweet reminder that there is always more to learn. The fact I borrow your mag from a friend to read and covet simply revives in me the desire stirred by the first shareware encounter with your monthly CD gift. Keep it up, keep it pure. We'll be damned if no one else does.

Kenneth Setiu, NZ

Well, PCPP does have quite a reputation as an aphrodisiac, you know.

Genre Slowly Fading

What's happened to the other genre types over the past few years? Sure, the occasional action game is released, but it seems increasingly obvious that FPS and strategy games are becoming the dominant genres. I mean, don't get me wrong, I know action games have been released, but in comparison to FPS/Strategy, the number is far less.

What happened to the good ol' platform scroller? Of course I know, its been replaced by 3d versions which are much better (Some would argue that the 2D Super Mario World remains the platform king - Ed). But when an action/adventure game is released such as Prince of Persia 3D, why is it so crap? The controls are so unresponsive. I mean someone finally decides to make an action/adventure game and it turns out so-so.

Why are game developers deserting us action game lovers, why, WHY! If we look at Half-Life, Tiberian Sun, Quake 3, Prince of Persia 3D and Homeworld, we see FPS/Strategy/FPS/Action/Strategy. There is only one action game in the lot. Is the action game genre slowly fading out of existence? Or will we see a revival?

Johnny Green, Email

With Messiah, Nocturne, Urban Chaos, Codename Eagle, etc, all inside this issue alone, we think you're exaggerating just a little bit.

Caption Caption

I have just noticed something very interesting (well, sort of) about the captions in your magazine. Once upon a time, if you didn't fill in a caption, it printed as "caption caption caption caption..."

BUT...

In your latest issue, this 'default' text seems to have changed to things like:

- a) This caption has gone on strike and
- b) stuff & nonsense stuff & nonsense ...

Is this in an attempt to make it look like you didn't actually forget to fill in the caption, and that you were just being witty, or what? Hmm. Just wondering.

David Farrier, NZ

Sorry, but this reply is currently out for lunch.

Shonky End Sequence

First and foremost, congrats on making a fantastic magazine every month. It is the best excuse to spend pocketmoney!

Now, onto a more serious matter: game satisfaction. I have been a gamer from the time of the C64, but since the PC has expanded into the ultimate gaming machine it is today, it seems game satisfaction has gone out the window. For all the games I have been playing, the end sequence turns out to be a load of tripe. A prime example is Half-Life. This took months to finish and, when I did, I'm treated to a five second animation sequence with a few words. Is months of gaming worthwhile just for that? Nope. Other offenders are Unreal, Kingpin, Thief and Blood II.

Don't get me wrong, the games are great, but when you finish them, they are about as convincing as a bouncer at a policeman's ball, i.e. not at all! I'm sick of playing games on end just to be treated to a shonky end sequence, it really lets the whole game down. If any game developers are reading this, please put a little more thought into the endings of your games, since this is where we decide whether the game is worthwhile or not.

Steven Stamatoopoulos, Email

Although we thought the finales to both Half-Life and Thief were rather good, if a little unconventional. But your point is well taken. We suspect it's something to do with the fact that few people ever actually finish games and, thus, a great end sequence is low down on the list of priorities for any game developer or publisher. Still, there have been some great "outros": Ben liked the post-race podium antics in GP2; March fondly recalls the final moments of Ultima VIII; David had a lump in his throat during the climactic scenes of The Last Express; while Malcolm is torn between the epic endings to Final Fantasy VII and VIII.

Byte Size

What happened to State of Play?

Stuart Kennedy, Email

To be entirely serious for a moment, we realised genres were irrelevant and that SOP was generally duplicating what was being covered elsewhere in the mag. Hence, it was canned.

IN-BOX

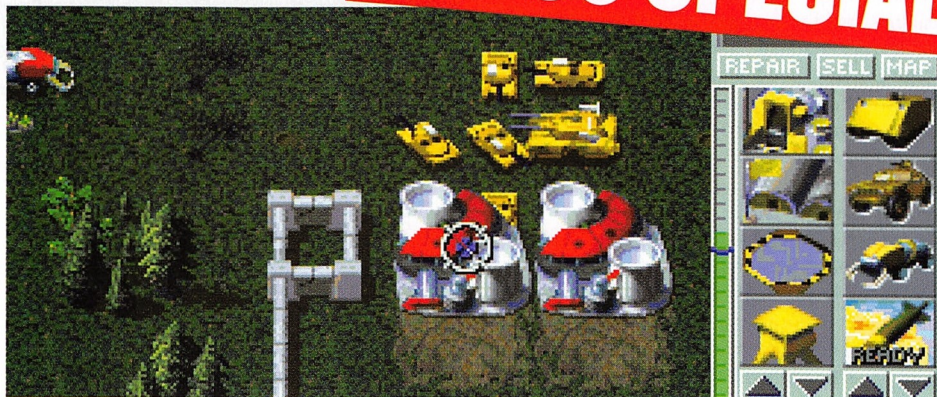
TOP 50 SPECIAL

In the wake of our Game of the Century feature in January, the PCPP In-Box was flooded with correspondence over what we got right and, more often, what we got wrong. Here's a small and completely unrepresentative selection of your irate indignation.

Read A Nintendo

I'm writing this letter because of what I would call a Crap Game of the Century. How could Quake win? How could Duke Nukem have come 50th? I believe that Doom should have won. Think of it this way: Doom and Wolfenstein are the games that started the spark for FPS. Before I started reading your mag, I didn't know what Quake was. So I got my hands on a copy and played it for half an hour before I was back on Doom (So you gave it a thorough testing, then - Ed). I showed the results to my friends and every one of them said, "What a load of crap!", and a big Duke Nukem fan was swearing his head off. Even kids who played Quake more said that Doom deserved it more.

Another thing, how could Age Of Empires 2: Age Of Kings even get in the Top 50 in such a short space of time, when Age Of Empires is



better. I bet most people would pick up your mag and probably expect Doom or another classic to win, but then we all know all of you are Quake addicts. Some of the kids out there who hate your mag and would rather read a Nintendo mag just have another reason why they hate your mag. But I still like it.

Matthew Asplin, Email

www.dosgames.com

I just want to say that Wolfenstein 3D was NOT the first FPS game. The first FPS (that I know of) was Catacomb Abyss by id Software. You can download it at www.dosgames.com.

Gavin Annand, Email

With Bad Weapons

I recently flicked through your latest magazine at the newsagent (Why you little...! - Ed) and noticed your Top 50 list. What surprised me was that at the top of the list was Quake. Now I believe that Quake deserved the spot, but I wonder if you do? You gave Quake a score of 92% (PCPP#6). Okay, but why then was Unreal a game with bad weapons and poor multiplayer coding given a score of 98% (PCPP#26)? Was there a change in rating techniques? I don't understand. And why was it that Quake 2 only scored 94% (PCPP#21) when it is a much more widely enjoyed game? Would you be able to shed some light on your scoring techniques? It would be much appreciated.

Matt Sander, Email

Magazine Religiously

I am an avid reader of PC PowerPlay (I know what day it hits the local newsagent) and as usual rushed down to buy this month's issue. I immediately turned to your Top 50 to see what incredibly good 'game' scored the number one prize and was hugely disappointed to see Quake there.

Quake is a game engine and a fantastic one at that. However, as a 'game' it is very poor -

unless, of course, you have no life/girlfriend/career and are a deathmatch freak. I then looked for Half-Life to see what is arguably the best single player game ever. It placed at number 17 - are you serious?

Quake is the biggest heap of stinking shit game I have ever laid eyes on in my life - but it is a great piece of technology. Please don't champion deathmatch games at the cost of finely crafted single player games. Other magazines do this for you. I buy your magazine religiously because it hasn't till now taken sides in the single/multiplayer debate.

Roger James, Email

Praise Across The Globe

After picking up PCPP#44 through the mail, I was confronted with the Top 50 Games of All Time, and with the highly questionable exclusion of Unreal. You say it did not make it because it lacked decent gameplay, yet you hoisted Quake to the top ranking? Now what is that about? Either game could be argued to have little or a lot of gameplay, but to deny Unreal of a place in the top fifty, I think, shows a lack of respect towards what it has achieved. It singularly pushed the development of games forward by about a year, with even you guys stating that it was a game that should have been released a year later, such was its advancement of the gaming community. It has spawned the release of many top class games, most notably Unreal Tournament, which has been received with huge amounts of praise across the globe. I'm not writing to you about the injustices of your selections, but to maybe realise that Unreal was a brilliant game, including gameplay, and having the technology to blitz the competition for half a year.

I bring you back to your own comments about how much of a brown-trousers game this was. Remember the sudden darkening of the hallway, and a Skarj running at you in pitch black? Running through a doorway and having another Skarj drop from the roof



AUSTRALIA'S MOST WANTED

Shifting Fortress

There's still no shifting Team Fortress 2 from the number one position this month, though we must admit it was a close run thing as Blizzard mounted a creditable challenge with Diablo 2. While Deus Ex is making itself very comfortable in third place, we suspect Messiah might climb even higher than fourth after you read our extremely tasty preview starting on p28.

Send you Top Five Most Wanted Games to: wanted@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

above? To turn around and say it lacked gameplay is really being hypocritical, and I would have expected more from the crew that has brought me joy for over 3 years now.

Nevertheless, keep up the good work fellas.

Biohazard, Cherrybrook

P.S. Anyone else notice the disappearance of the Australian PC Gamer? Hahaha, they just couldn't match this beast!

As Tim Best said, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." We hope you welcome him with open arms.

Under The Huge

On p47 of PCPP#44, there is a Quake player shooting at a shambler with a rocket launcher. Only a rookie would do this because a shambler only takes half damage from a rocket. You should use a nail or super nail gun.

Also, on p141 the caption under the huge pic of Lara says Tomf Ramier, not Tomb Raider. Are you playing The Last Revelation with one hand?

Keep up the good work otherwise

Da Putzing

Ed - Malcolm, since you took the offending screenshot, would you care to reply to this one?

Malcolm - Why, certainly. Everybody knows you can kill the big huggable shambling guy in a fraction of the time with a super-nail, but does that make for a cool screenshot? Nope, just makes for a mess on the floor.

Oh, and Tomf Ramier is an incredibly amusing in joke. Never you mind.

Burnt The Results

I just read your top 50 and then immediately laughed... I was in shock... 5 minutes later I was annoyed like I have never been annoyed at your magazine before. How



you could have the audacity to publish that list is beyond me. The editor should have rejected it outright. In your preamble you mention historical significance, lasting influence, innovation and gameplay. You then go ahead and forget Warcraft 2, Ultima Online and Diablo. To top it off you rank that overrated game Quake as number 1.

Let's start with Quake shall we: last I heard, Quake would never had occurred had Wolfenstein not been a success, followed hotly by the greatest firstperson shooter Doom! You cannot possible quote that criteria and then put Quake number 1.

I then turn to the games that totally missed the cut. I'll take Warcraft 2 because you have hung yourself on this one alone. Your screenshot in this edition clearly shows 33000 people playing Warcraft 2 online. The game is at least 7 years old and propelled this genre to new levels. You should never publish subjective, biased results because it alienates your readers! I have actually burnt the results as a silent protest and hope you get the message that we, the readers, don't need the aggravation of reading that crap!

Headlice, Email

We considered the alternatives to publishing so-called "subjective, biased" results. Objectivity might have been achieved by simply listing the best-selling

This Months Winner

This month's winner is Andy Chang from Kellyville, NSW. For voting for Starlancer, he'll be receiving a copy of Digital Anvil's space epic when it's finally released. Hurry up, guys!

1	TEAM FORTRESS 2	◀
2	Diablo 2	◀
3	Deus Ex	◀
4	Duke Nukem Forever	◀
5	Warcraft 3	◀
6	Baldur's Gate 2	◀
7	Halo	◀
8	Thief 2	◀
9	Grand Prix 3	◀
10	Messiah	◀

games of all time. But we suspected few readers would have felt satisfied with a Top 50 headed by Myst. Perhaps instead we could have tried to second-guess the games we thought you guys might have enjoyed the most? But we had no idea where to start with that.

In the end, we decided that the only thing we could rely upon was our own individual and collective opinion. Thus, yes, the Top 50 was subjective and biased, but there was no alternative.

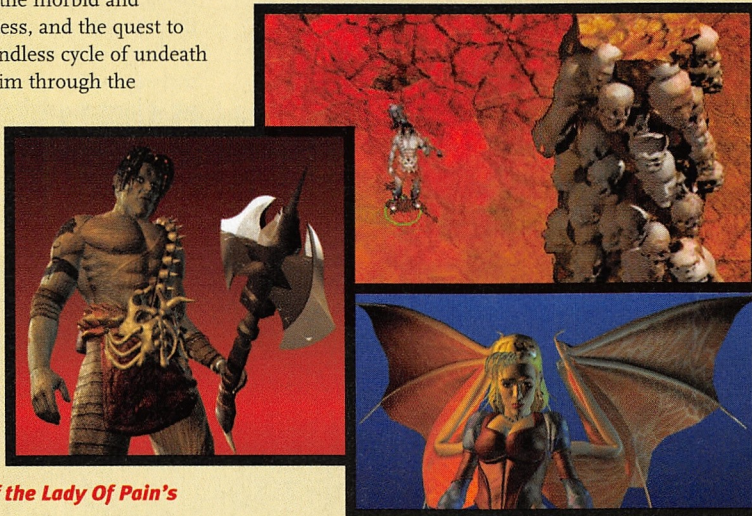
COMPETITIONS

PLANESCAPE TORMENT

6 COPIES OF THE GAME

Planescape Torment is the morbid and brooding tale of the Nameless, and the quest to remove himself from his endless cycle of undeath and rebirth that will take him through the multiversal city of Sigil, to the depths of the Hells and finally to the very home of death itself. Taking on bizzare foes and allying with everything from fallen succubi, to permanently burning mages, the game is addictive, scary and simply the RPG done to perfection. And to have your own copy, which you need, simply answer this

Q: What are the names of the Lady Of Pain's servants?



SWAT 3

6 COPIES OF THE GAME

Gun nuts everywhere loved SWAT 3 and so will you. A very realistic portrayal of urban combat, the game follows the attempts of an LA SWAT team trying to keep the peace over a week where terrorists have flocked to the city to prevent world peace talks. Weapons used are the realistic realistic real world type and gun physics are frighteningly real. It's logical, challenging scenarios turns up the heat on tactical simulators everywhere and it will have you rappelling walls screaming "hup hup hup!" in seconds flat.

Q: Name 3 automatic weapon calibres and 2 shotgun calibres.



IMPERIUM GALACTIA 2

6 COPIES OF THE GAME

We love this game. We all are waiting for our copies. We all want to conquer the Universe. Oh yes, indeed. Unfortunately, we have to give our precious copies to you people. Three races all vie for the same precious resources, utilising differing styles of war and peace. In typical manner, there can be only one survivor. With improved resource management rules over the original and vicious warfare on land and in space, brute force is not enough to conquer the universe. Cut-throat diplomacy and some careful planning are the way to go.

Q: What is the second closest star to Earth?



WHERE TO SEND

Write the answer, along with your name and address on the back of an envelope. Tip: Don't forget to put the competition name on the front of the envelope.

All entries close February 1st.

Send to:

<competition name>

PC PowerPlay

78 Renwick St.

Redfern NSW, 2016

ISSUE 44 WINNERS

GABRIEL KNIGHT III

Q. Who was the first Grandmaster of the legendary Templar Knights?

A. Hugues de Payens of Champagne founded the Templar Knights in late 1119 and led them until his death in 1136. However, formal recognition of the authoritative role of Grandmaster was not sanctified by the Pope until 1139. Therefore, theoretically, Hugues was the first Grandmaster, but Robert de Craon who succeeded him was the first legitimate Grandmaster.

Apparently "they were an awesome order, until some people got a little greedy and condemned them as devil worshippers and burnt them at the stake to get their property."

M. Ryland, Runcorn QLD

J. Campbell, Double Bay NSW

D. Shortt, Narre Warren VIC

B. Green, Warwick QLD

S. Mizen, Ballajura WA

N. Richards, Vincentia NSW

OMIKRON: THE NOMAD SOUL

Q. List the names of all the persona's adopted by David Bowie throughout his music career.

A. Ziggy Stardust, Thin White Duke, David Robert Jones, Aladdin Sane, Pierrot, Halloween Jack, Nathan Adler, Major Tom, Iggy Pop, Hunky Dory, Blue Jean.

J. New, Adamstown Heights NSW

G. Clingan, Woronora NSW

L. Umber, Glen Waverly VIC

W. Bowyer, Noarlunga Downs SA

A. Young, Geelong VIC

L. Grieve, Adelaide SA

RAINBOW SIX: ROGUE SPEAR

Q. What is the motto of the SAS?

A. Who Dares Wins

M. Jan, Banjup WA

M. Travers, Clifton Hill VIC

H. Schinagl, Venus Bay VIC

Z. Xia, Magill SA

E. Schindler, East Launceston TAS

O. & S. Armstrong, East Burwood VIC

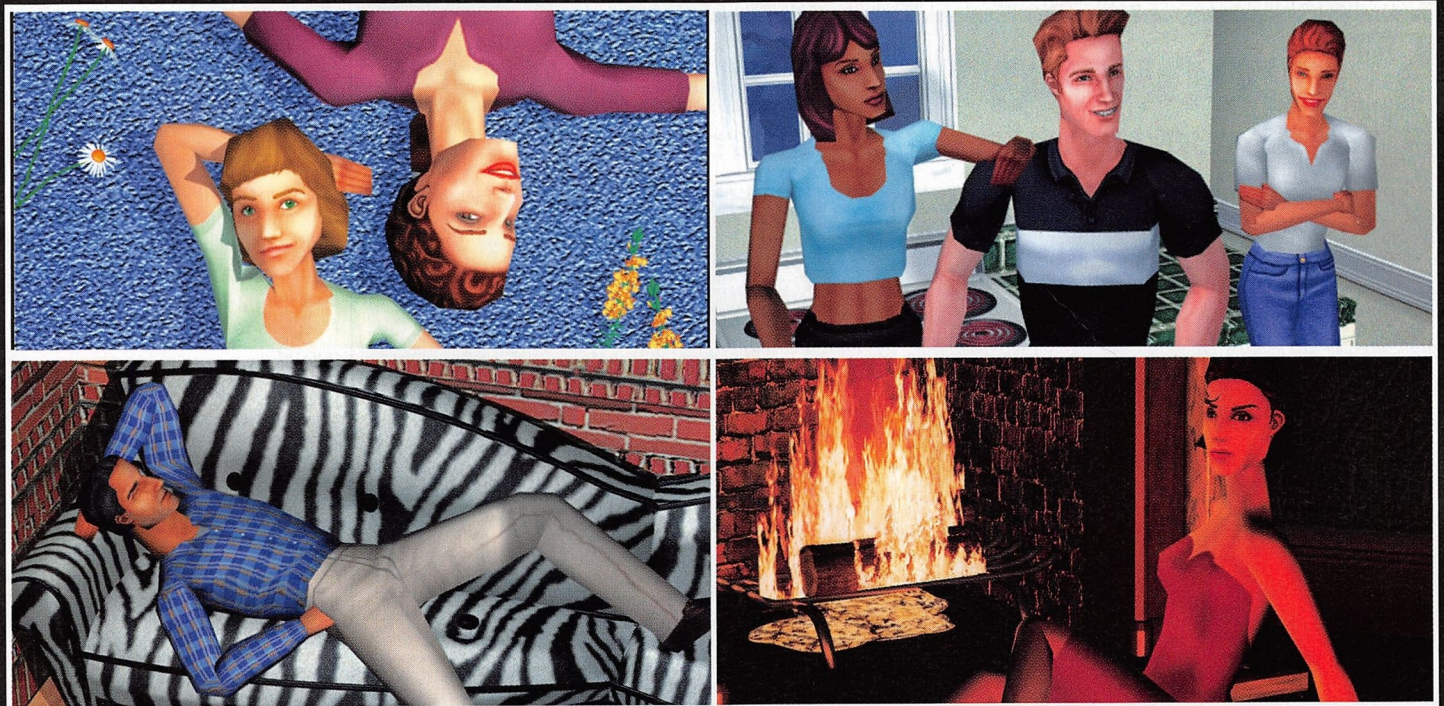
REVIEWS: BATTLEZONE 2, MESSIAH, FINAL FANTASY VIII, F/A 18 HORNET, SEPTERRA CORE AND MORE!
EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW: THIEF 2 - THE METAL AGE

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REVIEWED

THE SIMS



FEATURE

QUAKE III: ARENA VS UNREAL TOURNAMENT

Who will survive the ultimate DEATHMATCH?

THEODORE

20:57 Arsenal 2-0 Tottenham



Arsenal's new signing was certainly enthusiastic, though his disciplinary record left a lot to be desired...



COOKING WITH THE AVATAR

#1 - Baking while Britannia burns...



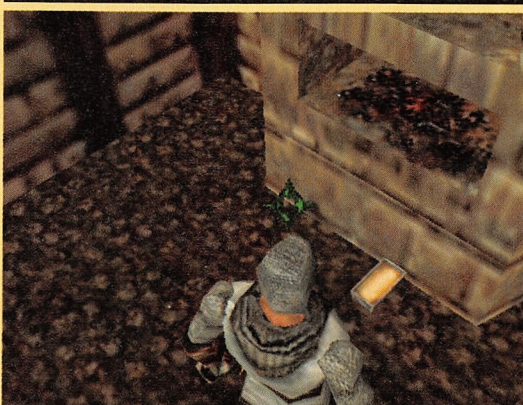
A. Place empty bread pan on floor near bag of flour and use flour.



B. Put flask of water on floor - carefully now - near pan and use the flask.



C. Place egg beside bowl and use. If you find you can only eat the egg instead, don't worry...



D. ...because the pan always falls off the oven shelf onto the floor anyway.

NEXT MONTH: See the Avatar prepare a Seafood Gumbo!

The Read Error Interview series with William T. Ford

This month:

Orbb

Orbb had arranged to meet with me at his palatial gothic space dungeon, the Arena of Death. After ringing the ornate doorbell to announce my arrival, a charming young lady greeted me with the customary reverence.

Girl: "Finally, someone who knows how to handle their weapon." She introduced herself as Mynx barely moments before exploding in a shower of gibs. I approved of my host's desire to impress.

WTF: "My friend, you must be Orbb. Of course, you know who I am."

Orbb: "Shhkreeeee!"

Before I could hit him with my opening shot, the curious two-limbed fellow dashed around the corner, clearly eager to evade my devastating line of questioning. Needless to say, I followed in hot pursuit.

WTF: "Why doesn't Quake 3 have teamplay modes more interesting than Capture the Flag?"

Growing more uncomfortable with my hardnosed technique, Orbb donned some red armour to protect itself from the incisive questioning. Following the bipedal creature up a darkened stairway, I discharged a fearsome verbal volley.

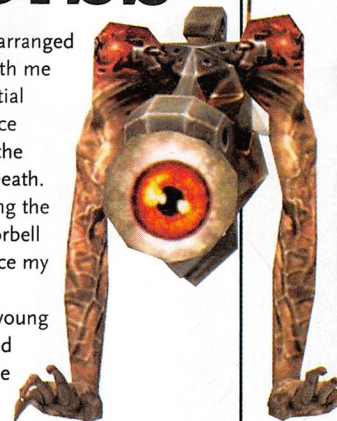
WTF: "How do you respond to accusations that Q3A is an engine without a game?"

It replied in kind, leaving me to descend the stairs with a torrent of grenades raining down around me. Having honed my skills on another arena-based shooter in recent weeks, I knew the final act of my interrogation would be a fatal blow.

WTF: "Why isn't Quake 3 as good as Unreal Tournament?"

Unfortunately I didn't live long enough to hear its pitiful reply, as my head was blown apart by a miraculous direct hit by a rocket.

Orbb: "Sleep, eat, frag - I am fulfilled."



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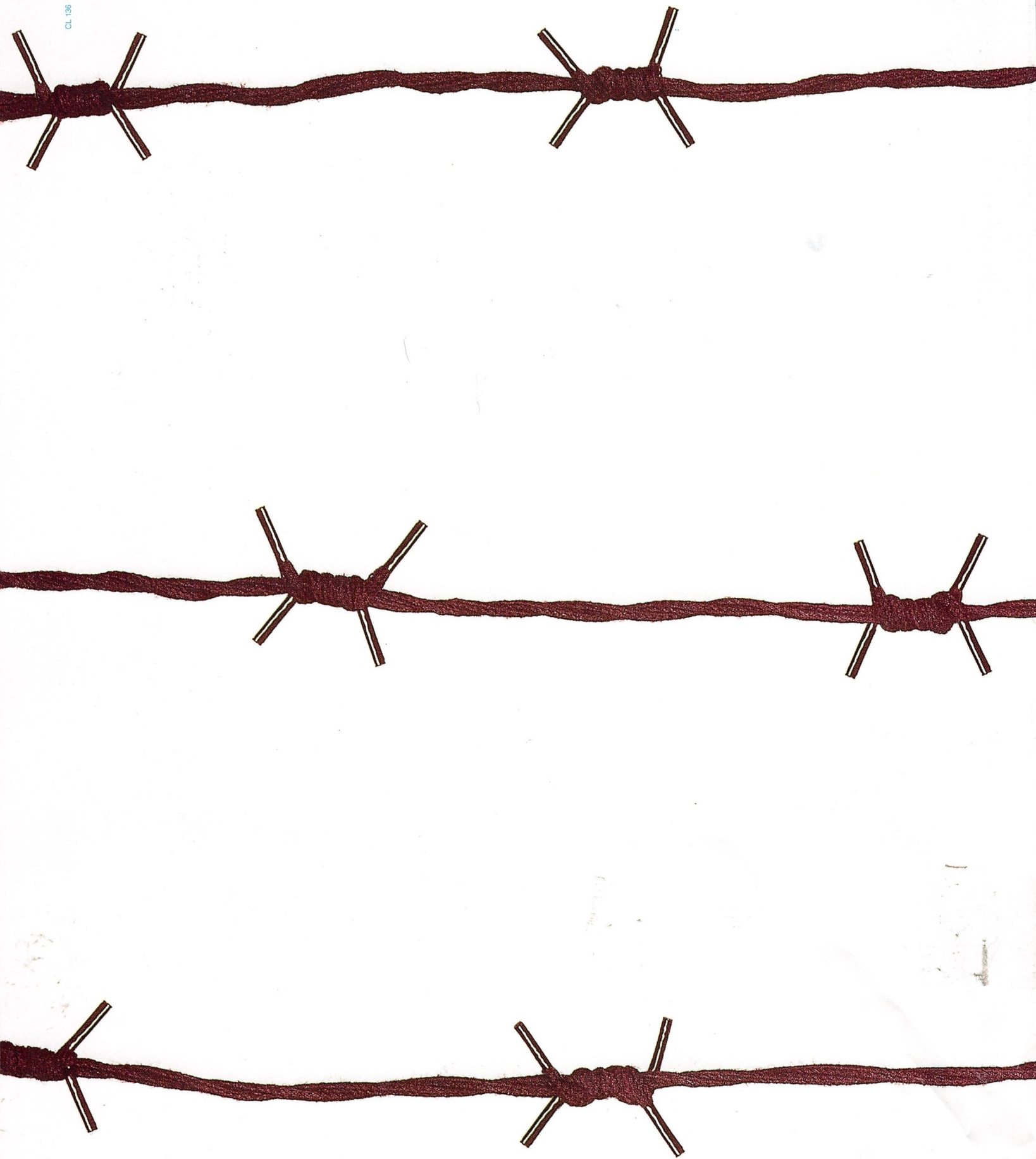
Look for the UNREAL LEVEL PAK.

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